

THE ROLE OF THE MARINE AMPHIBIOUS UNIT, SPECIAL OPERATIONS
CAPABLE IN LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ARTS AND SCIENCE

by

RICHARD A. HOBBS JR., MAJ, USMC
B.S., Illinois State University, 1974

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
1988

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88-3210

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AD-A198 180

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS		
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE DISTRIBUTION IS UNLIMITED		
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)					
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION US ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable) ATZL-SWD-GD		7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION	
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) FORT LEAVENWORTH, KS 66027-6900				7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)	
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable)		9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)				10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS	
		PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.		PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.
				WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.	
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) THE ROLE OF THE MARINE AMPHIBIOUS UNIT (SPECIAL OPERATIONS CAPABLE) IN LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT (U)					
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) MAJOR RICHARDS A. HOBBS JR. USMC					
13a. TYPE OF REPORT MASTERS THESIS		13b. TIME COVERED FROM 8-87 TO 6-88		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 6 MAY 1988	
15. PAGE COUNT 118					
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION SUBMITTED AS PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER OF MILITARY ARTS AND SCIENCES DEGREE.					
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)		
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	MARINE AMPHIBIOUS UNIT LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT SPECIAL OPERATIONS		
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)					
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20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS				21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED	
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL				22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code)	
				22c. OFFICE SYMBOL	

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Accession For	
NTIS	CRA&I <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>
DTIC	TAB <input type="checkbox"/>
Unannounced <input type="checkbox"/>	
Justification	
By	
Distribution/	
Availability Codes	
Dist	Avail and/or Special
A-1	



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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL

Name of Candidate: Major Richard A. Hobbs, Jr.

Title of Thesis: The Role of the Marine Amphibious Unit,
Special Operations Capable in Low
Intensity Conflict

Approved by:

W. C. Doyle, Thesis Committee Chairman
LtCol W. C. Doyle, USMC, BA

Leonard G. Anderson, Jr., Member, Graduate Faculty
LTC Leonard G. Anderson, Jr., USA, MS

Walter S. Towns, Member, Consulting Faculty
Dr. W. S. Towns, Ph.D.

Accepted this 3rd day of June 1988 by:

Philip J. Brookes, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF THE MARINE AMPHIBIOUS UNIT (SPECIAL OPERATIONS CAPABLE) IN LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT, by Major Richard A. Hobbs Jr., USMC, 118 pages.

This study compares the capabilities of the enhanced Marine Amphibious Unit (Special Operations Capable), MAU (SOC) with the requirements for conducting operations in Low Intensity Conflict (LIC). The focus of the study is on the improvements and expansion of capabilities of MAUs being Special Operations Capable. LIC is defined and discussed relative to the requirements for military forces operating in this environment. The capabilities of the MAU (SOC) are then compared to the requirements of LIC to establish a framework for the role of MAU (SOC) in LIC operations.)

The principal conclusion of the thesis is that the MAU (SOC) has a role in LIC operations. Its capabilities are best served in the area of peacetime contingency operations, where its rapid response and special operations enhancements provide a unique capability for military action. The MAU (SOC) has limited capability in foreign internal defense operations, due to the eventual length of such operations. Finally, the MAU (SOC) is a viable force for use in terrorism counteraction and peacekeeping operations, but again, other units may be better suited based on the circumstances of the situation. (KR)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The study of Low Intensity Conflict is not new. After World War II guerilla warfare began to come into its own. With the development of nuclear weapons and the checkmate between the superpowers many people thought wars would come to an end. Unfortunately this did not happen. Instead a new level of war developed, the limited war. This new style of war began in this century with Mao Tse Tung in China and spread throughout South East Asia until today it is widely practiced in many Third World nations.¹ Our preoccupation with a possible conflict with the Soviet Union in Europe detracts from focusing on the more likely scenario: Low Intensity Conflict (LIC). As Secretary of State George P. Shultz stated on January 15th, 1986: "Low Intensity Conflict is the prime challenge we will face, at least through the remainder of the century. The future of peace and freedom may well depend on how effectively we meet it."²

The first problem that must be addressed is finding a comprehensive definition for LIC. Just what is included in this category of war? Military thinkers are working on this problem in many forums. Seminars have been held, study groups have been

formed, service publications cry out for papers to address this issue. The search for answers continues throughout the military and strategy think tanks in the U.S.

The next question is how and with what force do we respond to the LIC threat? This thesis will survey recent research in this area and discuss several suggestions to resolve this issue.

Each of the services have begun addressing the issue of LIC. Recent service journals have called for and received articles about preparation and involvement in LIC operations. This thesis will specifically focus on the Marine Corps and its place in the LIC environment.

In 1985 the Marine Corps began training its Marine Amphibious Units (MAU) to be Special Operations Capable (SOC). This not only included special training but also included organizational and structural changes of the MAU. The changes were designed to provide improved capability for the MAU to meet current operational requirements. These new capabilities enhanced the employment of Marine Amphibious Units. Some of these new capabilities as well as some of the original capabilities of the MAU may apply to the requirements for LIC operations. The objective of this thesis is to determine how and where the MAU SOC may fit into U.S. military employment in Low Intensity Conflict.

The emphasis on preparing for LIC operations is increasing as a result of the interest of the Commandant of the Marine Corps. In January of 1988, the Commandant changed the name of

the Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) from Amphibious to Expeditionary. This is a logical and a historically grounded change. The Marine Corps has always been this nations' force in readiness and has conducted operations from the air, land and sea. The term amphibious has a connotation of from the sea and does not fully reflect the full capabilities of the current Marine forces. The new MAGTFs are called Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) and Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). The MAU (SOC) has now become the MEU (SOC). The organizations do not change, nor do the capabilities or missions. The change is only on the emphasis of the employment of MAGTFs in many different environments and not just limited to the amphibious environment.

All of the literature reviewed for this thesis refers to the previous names of MAF, MAB and MAU. In order to provide a clear understanding and to reduce confusion this thesis will use the previous terms of MAF, MAB and MAU instead of the new MEF, MEB and MEU (SOC). However, the expeditionary characteristics of MAGTFs is still of primary importance in comprehending the role of the Marine Corps in the current environment.

Problem Statement

In 1984 the Department of Defense tasked the services to reassess their ability to conduct special operations. The U.S. Marine Corps, in doing so, has developed a concept called the Marine Amphibious Unit (Special Operations Capable) or MAU (SOC).

This is not a new unit but an enhancement of a current organization. The objective of the MAU (SOC) program is to ensure permanently organized MAUs are capable of conducting amphibious special operations missions by themselves or in conjunction with other Service or joint special operations forces.³

The MAU (SOC) performs many of the standard missions of an amphibious task force. Through training, additional equipment and task organization, the MAU (SOC) can now perform appropriate amphibious special operations. This new capability offers much to our total defense needs, however, the role of this enhanced MAU in LIC has yet to be determined.

What is the concept of LIC? What is the role of the MAU (SOC) in this environment? These are the two questions which will be the focus of this thesis.

Significance of the Study

The Marine Corps is tasked by the Congress of the United States to carry out "all other missions as the President may direct" in addition to the primary role as warriors of the sea.⁴ In the past this mission has encompassed operations involving Low Intensity Conflict. A close analysis of military history will reveal the Marine Corps' participation in LIC from the Philippine insurrection in 1899, until the latest involvement in Grenada. This study will further define and discuss the role of the MAU (SOC) in the Low Intensity environment. The goal is to bridge

the gap of knowledge between U.S. Army doctrine of Low Intensity Conflict and the employment of the new MAU (SOC).

Review of the Literature Related to Low Intensity Conflict

Many authors have addressed the topic of Low Intensity Conflict. It begins with such people as B.H. Liddell Hart in his work on Strategy (1954) in which he discusses the future style of warfare, that of guerilla war."

In the 1960s President Kennedy was advised of the need for "special forces" that are able to handle these limited wars and assist our allies in the defense of democracy. Seymour J. Deitchman in Limited War and American Defense Policy (1964) conducted a detailed case analysis of limited wars that we now refer to as Low Intensity Conflict. His writings specifically address the military units available to conduct such limited war and how they might be used. Deitchman describes a speech by then Secretary of Defense McNamara, that in the decade of the 1960s the decisive struggle will take place in the arena of Low Intensity Conflict. Also during this time Krushchev and the Soviet Union began their support of "wars of national liberation". If these two statements by politicians of the 1960s sound familiar it is because they are being repeated today."

A comprehensive review of the use of military forces short of war is contained in a Brookings Institute study by Blechman and Kaplan titled Force without War (1978). This study concentrates on the use of U.S. Armed Forces as a political

instrument. The authors believe that in preparing and structuring our forces we must consider their use as a political tool of our foreign policy. They also state that these considerations must be given a greater priority if military planners are building forces to meet the needs of the big war, a land war in Europe.⁷ In analyzing over 200 conflicts and cases of military involvement in these actions short of war, the overriding measure of success was the strength of commitment of the U.S. and the use of a specific action which provided a clear signal of U.S. interest.⁸ In Force without War the authors address the use of the Marine Corps in previous conflicts short of war. The Marines are frequently used when the need exists for a rapid injection of ground forces. Marine forces have participated in 77 of the 215 actions reviewed in this book. "Marines are equipped, trained, and organized for quick reaction, limited operations, and flexible utilization."⁹

Most of the participation of Marines involved the use of forward deployed units, such as the current MAUs. The largest units involved were usually no larger than battalion size, which is the basic ground component of the MAU (SOC) today.

A primary theory of most political scientists and strategists is the Soviet Union's fostering of "wars of national liberation and popular revolts". In Limited War Revisited, Osgood describes the threat of Soviet expansion and exploitation throughout the world. We see this today in their joint effort with Cuba in Central America and Africa. He also states the need for containment of this expansion and questions the method and

force used to carry out this policy.¹⁰ Osgood believes we must develop the military and political forces to deal with and support a containment strategy. Again, this is difficult to accomplish if we concentrate solely on a land war in western Europe.¹¹

Porter in his article "Washington, Moscow and Third World Conflict in the 1980's" as published in Huntington's book, The Strategic Imperative: New Policies for American Security, agrees with Osgood's containment strategy. However the problem at hand is to maintain that delicate balance between effective containment of the Soviet expansion and still maintaining peace.¹² This is the fine line between Low Intensity Conflict and War and where the U.S. military role must be clearly defined when employed.

Taylor in Strategic Responses to Conflict in the 1990's added several more causes for Low Intensity Conflict beyond Soviet expansionism. He states that cultural differences, energy needs, competition for minerals, arms trading and nuclear proliferation all add to the fire of conflict. Now, says Taylor, is the time to prepare with appropriate reaction forces.¹³

What are the requirements in this new battlefield? This thesis will explore the role of the MAU (SOC) in this new form of warfare. Sam Sarkesian has been at the forefront of the strategists with his books, The New Battlefield and U.S. Policy and Low Intensity Conflict. Sarkesian contends that we are going to be continually drawn into this battlefield of Third World

conflicts. If we do nothing they will be drawn into the communist sphere of influence. "The New Realism" is that we are not prepared to deal with Third World conflicts. A democracy exists on moral and ethical standards that are not present in the Third World.¹⁴ Terrorism is a clear and dramatic example of this cultural difference.

In 1971 Kitson wrote in Low Intensity Operations, that there are two key elements to success in low intensity operations; (1) units that are trained, organized and equipped to carry out the task and (2) properly educated commanders and staff officers capable of advising the government and its agencies on how best to conduct the campaign.¹⁵ This timely comment at the end of the Vietnam conflict is applicable today. Are we training our units, commanders and staff officers to be properly prepared? There are many more articles and books which could be mentioned. In the interest of time and to properly limit the scope of this thesis I will refer the reader to the bibliography for a detailed list of current research on this topic of Low Intensity Conflict.

Review of Literature Related to the MAU (SUC)

What has the Marine Corps role been in Low Intensity Conflict? Major Andrew Pratt prepared a comprehensive article on that subject in Low Intensity Conflict and Modern Technology by David Dean and the Air University. Pratt applies the missions of Low Intensity Conflict to the Marine Corps' historic amphibious role. The article is oriented towards technology of the Marine

Corps and its ability to perform in the Low Intensity environment.¹⁶ He points out four areas where the Marine Corps should improve; (1) military operations in urban terrain, (2) command and control with the Department of State, (3) published doctrine on deployment of prepositioned shipping and (4) "triphibious operations": joint naval, land and air force operations.¹⁷ Pratt's study does not address the role of the new MAU (SOC). When Pratt wrote this article the MAU (SOC) did not exist. However, some of the conclusions drawn by Pratt in this article generally apply regardless of the size of the Marine unit.

Recent Marine Corps Gazette articles have discussed the new MAU (SOC) and its capabilities. Major H.M. Murdock presented a comprehensive review of the history, capability and training of the MAU (SOC) in his article "MAU (SOC): A Powerful Maritime Force".¹⁸ Gunnery Sergeant P.L. Cabal detailed the 18 basic missions of the new MAU (SOC) in his article, "MAU (SOC), Corps' Capabilities Enhanced".¹⁹

General Al Gray, the current Commandant of the Marine Corps, developed the Operational Concept for MAUs Being SOC, as the Commanding General of Fleet Marine Forces, Atlantic.²⁰ This document established the overall concept for the organization, training and operational employment of the MAU (SOC). The framework and basic structure of the MAU is established in Operational Handbook (OH-2), The Marine Air-Ground Task Force, published in 1987.²¹

Former Commandant, General P.X. Kelley wrote about "The Amphibious Warfare Strategy" in Proceedings. This strategy discusses the use of MAGTFs such as the MAU (SOC) in response to developing crises. General Kelley further states that the MAU (SOC) can provide the flexible response needed to contain political strife at the low end of the conflict spectrum.²²

Major Thomas C. Linn, another proponent of the use of Marines in LIC, emphasizes this point in his article, "Amphibious Warfare: A Misunderstood Capability", Armed Forces Journal International. The Marine Corps is the ideal force for forced entry and rapid response missions, both of which support LIC operations. He states that overspecialized forces limit the response options in a crisis.²³

In "Taking On Low Intensity Conflict", Marine Corps Gazette, Major Paul Melshen discusses some of the problems the Marine Corps must overcome if it is to be successful in LIC operations. He discusses the over-reliance on technology and firepower as faults and proposes solutions to overcome these problems. Decentralized training, expanding role of the junior leaders and increase in "people power" are just some of his recommendations.²⁴

There has been a great deal of attention in the military literature to LIC and a great deal on the new MAU (SOC). This thesis will merge the two and help answer the question of the role of the MAU (SOC) in LIC.

Definition of Terms

As defined in current U.S. Army doctrine, Low Intensity Conflict is "a limited politico-military struggle to achieve political, military, social, economic, or psychological objectives involving the actual or contemplated use of military capabilities up to, but not including, combat between regular forces. It can be protracted, is generally confined to a geographical area, and is often characterized by constraints on weaponry, tactics, and the level of violence.²⁵ The definition of this concept of limited war has filled volumes of material and has usurped untold hours of professional debate. The distinction between total war and low intensity conflict will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3.

Methodology

The basis of this thesis is drawn from a review of current literature and doctrine of Low Intensity Conflict. The objective is to concentrate on the requirements of a military force to carry out missions in the Low Intensity arena. In research of the MAU (SOC) less material is available. A new concept and initiative for the Marine Corps, the MAU(SOC) is barely out of the starting gate. Nonetheless, I have been able to gather sufficient information to address the capabilities of the MAU (SOC), which will allow me to relate it to the requirements of Low Intensity Conflict. This study will address the role of the MAU (SOC) in LIC. It will not attempt to apply the role of other

larger Marine Air Ground Task Forces, such as MABs or MAFs.

Organization of the Study

The following outline is the organization of the thesis:

I. Chapter 1. Introduction. An introduction to the research, the problem, its significance to the military, review of the literature, definitions, the methodology and the organization of the study.

II. Chapter 2. The Marine Amphibious Unit (Special Operations Capable). Chapter Two will describe the MAU SOC and its capabilities.

III. Chapter 3. Low Intensity Conflict (LIC). Chapter Three will discuss LIC and the missions for the military today.

IV. Chapter 4. The Role Of MAU SOC in Low Intensity Conflict. This synthesizing chapter will relate the capabilities of the MAU SOC to the missions of Low Intensity Conflict and describe the role of the MAU (SOC) in Low Intensity Conflict.

V. Chapter 5. Conclusions and Recommendations. The final chapter will summarize the findings and make recommendations for future research and study.

Summary

Although Low Intensity Conflict is not new, the emerging realization that LIC is our most likely battleground of the

present and the foreseeable future requires our attention and focus on the U.S. response to LIC operations. This country and its' military forces must be prepared to respond to the threat of Soviet expansionism throughout the Third World, not just in Western Europe.

The latest development of the Marine Corps, the MAU (SOC), enhances the capabilities of this nation's historic force in readiness. For many years Marines have been called on to respond to world crises. With the nature of the threat changing, so must the Marine Corps change to respond to the threat. The question remains, what is the role of the MAU (SOC) in LIC operations? The following Chapters will address this question as well as develop additional issues for future study.

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CHAPTER 2

THE MARINE AMPHIBIOUS UNIT (SPECIAL OPERATIONS CAPABLE)

MAU(SOC)

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the amphibious nature of the Marine Corps, to introduce the Marine Air Ground Task Force concept and then more specifically discuss the Marine Amphibious Unit (Special Operations Capable), its capabilities and missions.

The Amphibious Charter of the Marine Corps

To understand today's Marine Corps one must understand the development of the amphibious mission. The first mission of the Marine Corps was to provide security aboard naval vessels. Later this role was expanded to include elements of landing parties in the seizure of advanced naval bases. The Corps led an auspicious life through the end of the late 1800s, but was in a constant struggle for self preservation. The Marine Corps was a target of both the Navy and the Army, both services desiring to do away with the Marine Corps. It was usually the Congress that came to the aid of the Marines.

Most Marines give Major General John A. LeJeune the credit for the initial amphibious assault orientation. In the 1920s, as the Commandant, and throughout his Marine career, Gen LeJeune perceived a strategic need for the U.S. and the Navy to be able

to secure advanced naval bases in the Pacific. His predecessors were tied to the century-old missions of Marines providing security aboard naval vessels and at naval bases. This expeditionary mission was further developed prior to World War II and enabled the U.S. and the Marine Corps to carry out their Pacific strategy. General LeJeune's contribution to the Marine Corps is not forgotten and his words in 1921 ring true today.

The record of our Corps is one which will bear comparison with that of the most famous military organization in the world's history... Marines have won foremost honors in war, and in the long tranquility at home generation after generation of Marines have grown gray in war in both hemispheres and in every corner of the seven seas, that our country and its citizens might enjoy peace and security.¹

In 1947 the Congress of the United States passed the National Security Act of 1947. This law established the size and mission of the Marine Corps for the years to come. This legitimacy for the amphibious mission was the turning point in the Marine Corps' role as the lead service in the development and maintenance of the amphibious warfare capability. The Act required that the Marine Corps provide rapidly deployable amphibious forces for contingency missions in support of the national strategy. It also established the size of the Marine Corps at three divisions and three wings, which provided the framework for the Marine Corps' Air-Ground team.

The Marine Corps has gained a lasting place in our nation and its continued existence as a strategic amphibious force is assured. Or is it? In 1976, a Brookings Institution study questioned the viability of the amphibious mission and the

"light" Marine Corps' ability to survive in today's mechanized environment.² This study has been the subject of many articles and scholarly works and has no place in this thesis, except to point out that the Marine Corps and its amphibious role are not carved in granite. The Marine Corps must be prudent in its analysis of capabilities and abilities to provide the U.S. with a credible and viable force to carry out the national will.

Former Commandant, General P.X. Kelley, established what has become the Amphibious Warfare Strategy. This strategy is complementary to the Naval Warfare Strategy, now professed by the Chief of Naval Operations and the Secretary of the Navy. It differs from the original amphibious strategy of General LeJuene in that it is a response to the global Soviet threat. Kelley states that our greatest threat is the Soviet Union's quest for world domination.³ The U.S. must have the capability to rapidly respond to any developing world crisis. The Marine Corps and Navy team will provide the capability to apply this discrete power inherent in naval forces to handle the unexpected crises generated by Soviet expansionism.

Criticism of drifting into a land-based force have come from some. The increase in high technology systems, fancy weaponry and mechanized forces add to the spectre of a new land-based strategy. A balance must be maintained between current equipment and remaining "light" enough to fight an amphibious campaign and then to sustain that fight. Lt Col Thompson in a Marine Corps Gazette article stated that the Marine Corps should concentrate

on amphibious warfare and leave the land campaign to the Army. Further, the Army should be responsible for all of the "low probability" (high intensity) end of the conflict spectrum. Finally, Thompson believes the Army should relieve the Marines once the Marines have spent 180 days ashore in a campaign.⁴ This is not an unusual attitude but one that is held by many Marines. The problem seems to be in the ability to extricate the Marine Corps from conflict once they are inserted.

This section has discussed some of the historical and philosophical aspects of Marines and Amphibious warfare and established a starting point in understanding the Marine perspective. The next section will address the current doctrinal organization of Marine Amphibious forces and their employment.

The Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Concept

This section will provide a background for an understanding of the organization and missions of the fighting forces in an amphibious operation and will discuss the three basic organizations of the Marine Air Ground Task Force: the Marine Amphibious Force (MAF), the Marine Amphibious Brigade (MAB) and the Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU). Marine Forces are most effective in battle when employed as a strategic mobile combined arms air-ground combat force possessing its own combat service support, all under a single commander.⁵

This is the basic precept for the organization of Fleet Marine Forces (FMF) throughout the Marine Corps. The missions

which apply to these FMF MAGTFs are as follows:

1. Seizure or defense of advanced naval bases.
2. The conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign.
3. Such other duties as the President may direct.

Before describing each specific MAGTF we need to understand the operational characteristics of all MAGTFs, in general.

Operational Characteristics of MAGTFs

Amphibious operations are special operations, in that, special doctrine, training and preparations are required for their success. By their very nature they are joint operations and usually tend to be combined operations. Any mission assigned must consider the operational characteristics of a MAGTF.

Readiness for Expeditionary Service. The Navy Marine team and joint deployments throughout the world provide a special capability for the nation. History has shown the value of this team and the success of their employment.

Strategically Mobile. Today, more than ever, the Marine Corps is prepared to deploy rapidly, with strength and self sustainment throughout the globe. Forward deployed MAUs and the Maritime Prepositioned Forces provide the flexibility for rapid application of combat power ashore.

Capability for Forcible Entry. The primary means for forcible entry has been and will continue to be our MAGTFs. Again, the combination of the Navy Marine team will provide

sufficient force for forcible entry. The current deployment of the Landing Craft Air Cushioned (LCAC) now allows MAGTFs access to over 70% of the littorals in the world. This asset increases MAGTF capability to "hit them where they ain't," to pit our strength against enemy weakness.

Environmental Versatility. MAGTFs train in "every clime and place", from the Arctic colds in Alaska to the jungles of South East Asia, from the deserts of Egypt to the mountains of Norway. The Marines have always and will continue to prepare to fight in any and all environments.

Capability for Independent Action. The very nature of MAGTFs composed of separate command, combat, combat support, combat service support and aviation elements all combined into a single fighting force give them the capability of independent action and operations. Although normally found in Amphibious operations, the MAGTF is capable of other types of ground and air warfare and is therefore a valuable force in many situations.

Sea-Land-Air Coordination. The strength of the organization of a MAGTF is its ability to tie together all three elements of combat: sea, land and air. Its unique capabilities offer a variety of options to the commander in use and employment of Marine forces.

Short-term Logistic Strength and Long-term Logistic Limitations. A MAGTF is not immortal. As mentioned above it is a self-sustaining force, however, these capabilities do have their limitations. The largest MAGTF, a MAF, has the ability to

sustain itself for approximately 60 days. The MAB can keep up its efforts for about 30 days. The smallest MAGTF, the MAU, can deploy ashore and sustain itself without external augmentation for about 15 days. If MAGTFs are used in protracted conflicts ashore sustainment must be planned and provided by the logistic "pipeline". JCS Pub 2 gives this additional responsibility to the U.S. Army.

Flexibility. Marines and now their MAGTF components have been used for many missions, from presence and show of force to protracted war. MAGTFs are designed to meet the needs of the nation across the spectrum of warfare, from low intensity to high intensity.

Tactical Surprise. Again, the Navy-Marine team offers the advantage of surprise to the capabilities of MAGTFs. The ability to steam from New York to Miami in two days and to conduct an amphibious assault anywhere along the eastern coast of the U.S. exhibits the ability to gain the key element of tactical surprise. The added over-the-horizon (OTH) capability of the LCAC provides unlimited choice of landing sites for amphibious assaults.

Compatibility with Naval, Joint, and Combined Operations. MAGTFs are organized, equipped and trained to work in all three arenas. Constant naval deployments, and joint and combined operations and training enhance and refine the Marines' capabilities in all three of these crucial areas. MAGTFs are always ready for use as a component of a naval, joint or combined

force.

Sea Basing. MAGTFs need not always move all assets ashore and operate separately. The ability to maintain command/control, combat service support and forces aboard shipping provides the minimum "footprint" ashore. This concept works well in short, contingency operations and enhances tactical flexibility.*

Structure and Organization of MAGTFs

The structure of a MAGTF contains four basic elements: command element, and subordinate ground combat element, aviation combat element, and combat service support element. Figure 2-1 provides an example of the structure of a MAGTF.

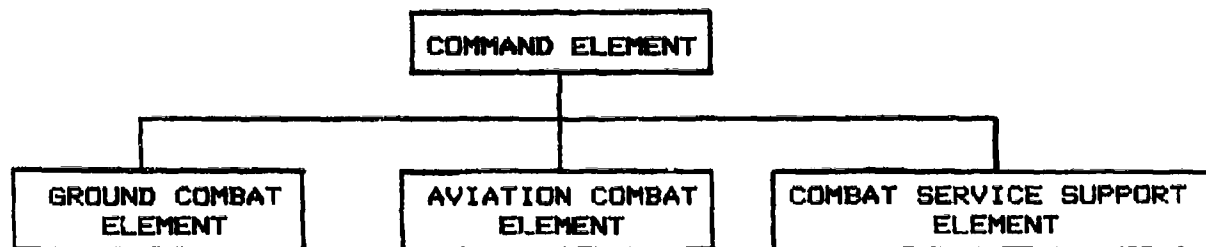


Figure 2-1. Structure of Marine Air-Ground Task Forces.⁷

This structure holds true regardless of the size of the MAGTF and the elements.

The Command Element is the permanent organization trained and prepared to employ its assets upon allocation. This centralized planning over the three main elements of the MAGTF provides the essential command, control and communications for effective planning and execution of operations.

The Ground Combat Element (GCE) is a task organized unit to

carry out the land prosecution of the battle. It is composed of the essential combat and combat support units based upon the situation and mission assigned. It is normally formed around at least an infantry battalion, but could be as large as an infantry division.

The Aviation Combat Element (ACE) is also task organized based on the situation and mission. The functions performed by the ACE are air reconnaissance, anti-air warfare, assault support, offensive air support, electronic warfare and control of aircraft and missiles. The ACE is normally formed around at least a squadron but may be as large as an entire air wing.

The Combat Service Support Element (CSSE) is task organized based upon the situation and the organization and equipment of the GCE and ACE. It is tasked with normal CSS functions of supply, maintenance, transportation, engineer, ordinance, health, postal and other administrative support. The CSSE varies in size from a MAU service support group (MSSG), brigade service support group (BSSG) to a force service support group (FSSG).

The important point of the structure of these elements is the key fact that their organization depends on the situation and mission for which they have been formed. The Command element is the only permanent organization in Marine Corps force structure, all other elements are task organized as required. Figure 2-2 displays the current distribution of MAGTFs in the Marine Corps today.

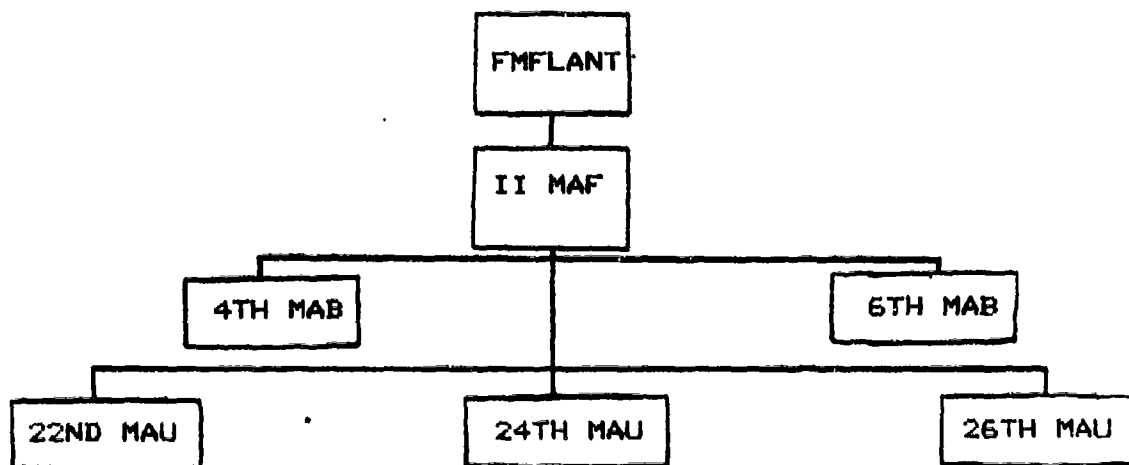
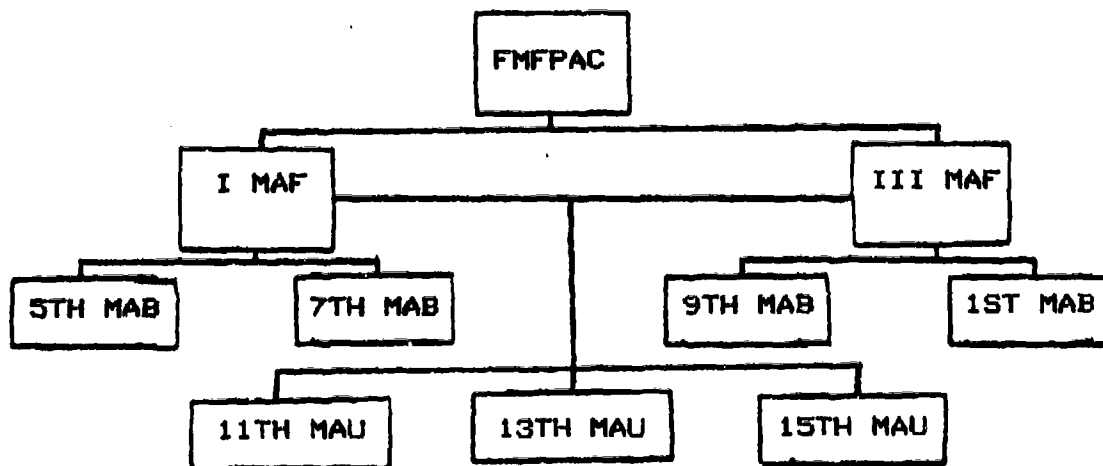


Figure 2-2. Distribution of MAGTFs.●

We have now described the framework of the MAGTF and are prepared to take a closer look at the three specific MAGTFs in the Fleet Marine Forces: the MAF, MAB and MAU. It is central to the concept that MAGTFs are flexible "building blocks", in that, a MAU may become a part of a MAB and MABs once deployed may be

the lead element of a MAF. This ability to absorb into the structure of a larger MAGTF is integral to the operational characteristics described earlier. Let us look at the largest MAGTF first, the MAF.

The Marine Amphibious Force (MAF)

The MAF is the largest MAGTF and normally is composed of a Marine division, a Marine aircraft wing and a Marine force service support group. It may be composed of several divisions and air wings but usually contains only one of each. The MAF is commanded by a lieutenant general in combat operations. Figure 2-3 indicates the structure of the MAF.

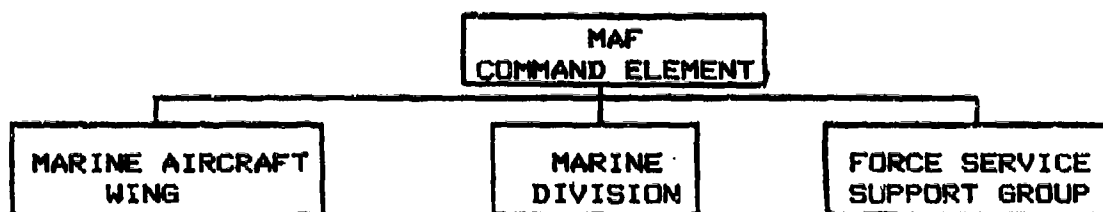


Figure 2-3. Basic Structure of a MAF.

The MAF is capable of many missions. The following is a list of some of those missions:

1. Conduct of Amphibious operations to include assaults, raids, demonstrations and withdrawals.
2. Commitment as a follow-on reinforcement for a committed smaller MAGTF.
3. Conduct of sustained operations ashore.
4. Conduct of operations in support of a maritime

campaign such as the seizure or defense of an advanced naval base.

5. Conduct of low intensity conflict operations such as counterinsurgency, terrorism counteraction, peacekeeping or peacetime contingency operations.

6. Protection/evacuation of noncombatants or installations.¹⁰

The MAF can be employed and deployed in several configurations. The flexibility of a task organized force offer advantages not available to units of comparable size. As the above missions illustrate, the MAF can be phased ashore in an amphibious operation through the use of smaller MAGTFs such as MAUs or MABs or it can be used in full force on a single amphibious operation. This time phasing of MABs ashore is divided into the initial assault echelon and the assault follow on echelon (AFOE). The AFOE forces can be deployed by surface or air based upon the situation and support available. Amphibious shipping is a limitation on deployment options, however the Marine Corps may take advantage of this through the flexibility of MAF employment.

The MAF is the largest MAGTF in the Marine Corps inventory and as such is the least likely force to be committed. The most probable force for initial employment in a war time mission is the MAB. This next section will then discuss the MAB and its employment options.

The Marine Amphibious Brigade (MAB)

The most flexible MAGTF, in terms of employment options, is the MAB. This section will discuss the organization, missions and employment of the MAB.

The MAB is again a task organized force centered around a reinforced infantry regiment with a Marine aircraft group and a brigade service support group. The MAB may be task organized with more than one regiment or aircraft group, but is normally organized as shown below. The MAB is commanded by a brigadier general. Figure 2-4 displays the typical structure of the MAB.

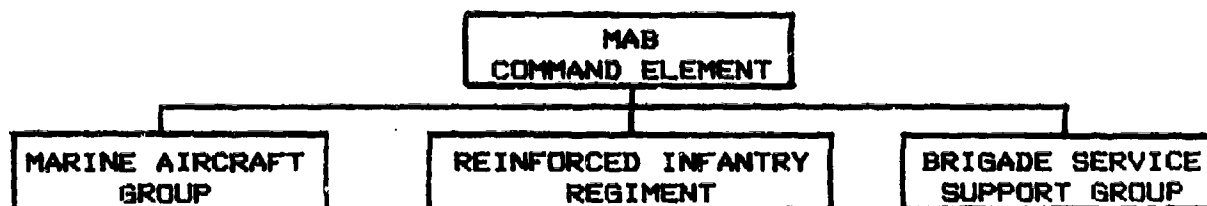


Figure 2-4. Basic Structure of a MAB.¹¹

The missions of the MAB are similar to those of a MAF except on a smaller scale and a MAB cannot conduct sustained operations ashore. The following are the textbook missions of the MAB:

1. Commitment as a follow-on reinforcement for a committed MAU or other forces.
2. Commitment as an advanced force of a follow-on larger MAGTF.
3. Conduct of amphibious operations such as assaults, raids, demonstrations, or withdrawals.
4. Deployment with maritime and geographic prepositioned equipment and supplies.

5. Conduct of operations in support of a maritime campaign, such as the seizure or defense of an advanced naval base.

6. Conduct of low intensity conflict operations, such as counterinsurgency, terrorism counteraction, peacekeeping or peacetime contingency operations.

7. Performance of humanitarian assistance/disaster relief.

8. Protection/evacuation of noncombatants or installations.¹²

The MAB is the most flexible force of the MAGTF concept. It can absorb smaller MAUs into its organization as it arrives on the scene as well as become part of a larger MAGTF, a MAF when confronted with the requirement for sustained operations. The MAB is deployed ashore in a phased scenario with an assault echelon, an assault follow-on echelon and/or a fly-in echelon.

A limitation of the MAB is the requirement for expeditionary airfields, bulk fuel storage facilities and large beach support areas. As we will soon see the MAU does not have these limitations and may operate entirely from a sea base. With additional support from the Navy, the MAB can operate for a limited time from a sea-based configuration. Marine aircraft could operate from naval carriers and support ships could provide bulk fuel support. Exploitation of host nation or liberated airfields and support facilities can also assist the deployment of the MAB ashore.

The recent development of the Maritime Prepositioned Ships (MPS) program has allowed the expansion of the MAB's capabilities to deploy. The MPS are specific ships with a complete set of equipment and supplies for a MAB. The concept is for the MAB personnel to deploy via air or surface to "marry up" with the equipment and supplies and to deploy from a friendly port or air facility to the hostile area. Currently, there are three MPS squadrons deployed around the world: one each in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans.

The other method of MAB deployment is aboard naval amphibious shipping and the conduct of forced entry into the hostile area as required. Currently the Navy has sufficient shipping for about three MABs. In the 1990s that capability will increase to about four MABs. The Marine Corps currently has six MABs of which any combination of the six may deploy either with the MPS or aboard naval amphibious shipping. Again, it should be emphasized that the Marine Corps will deploy as MABs and fight any sustained operations as MAFs.

We have mentioned the capability of the MAB to absorb smaller MAGTFs such as the MAU. The next section will discuss the MAU and its place in the MAGTF concept.

The Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU)

This section will discuss the basic MAU as part of the MAGTF concept which is the foundation of the MAU (SOC). This

foundation will prepare us for more detailed discussion of the enhanced MAU or the new MAU (SOL).

The MAU is the smallest MAGTF and is normally formed around an infantry battalion, a composite aircraft squadron and a MAU service support group. It is commanded by a Colonel and is the most frequently deployed MAGTF. Figure 2-1 shows that there are currently six MAUs with at least two afloat at any given time. Figure 2-5 depicts the structure of the MAU.

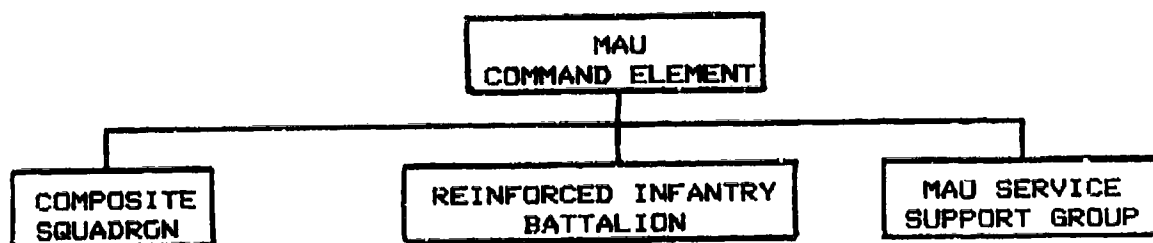


Figure 2-5. Basic Structure of a MAU.¹⁰

The MAU is often referred to as the "pointy end of the spear", in that it is the leading edge of the Marine Corps' deployed forces throughout the globe. This force is designed to react to crisis situations where time does not allow a build up of forces or the deployment of a larger force. The MAU is an austere force and is capable of combat operations of limited scope and duration without external support. The following is a list of missions which may be assigned a MAU:

1. Commitment as an advanced force of a follow-on larger MAGTF.
2. Conduct of amphibious operations of limited scope, such as amphibious raids.

3. Conduct of a broad spectrum of crisis/contingency operations in a maritime environment, such as counterinsurgency, terrorism counteraction, or peacekeeping or peacetime contingency operations of limited scope.
4. Noncombatant evacuation operations and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief.
5. Protection/evacuation of noncombatants or installations.
6. Reinforcing role by surface or airlift.
7. Limited air support, fire support, intelligence and electronic warfare support, combat service support, or other military assistance to allies.¹⁴

The MAU is deployed aboard amphibious ready group (ARG) shipping for about six months. The ARG is made up of about three to five amphibious ships, based on the availability and requirements of the Navy. The MAU normally remains sea-based due to limited self sustainment capability. It is dependant on naval shipping for communications, warehousing and maintenance. Only the equipment, supplies and logistic support needed ashore is separated from the sea base. Because of this logistic "umbilical cord" naval shipping must stay in the area of operations to sustain the MAU forces ashore. Embarkation planning must be detailed and meticulous to ensure the proper supplies and equipment are embarked and loaded to facilitate support of the amphibious operations ashore. This can become critical in

preparing for the myriad of contingency missions as described above. A close working relationship between the embarked forces and the naval forces is essential to maintain the flexibility required for swift execution in a crisis situation.

The air capabilities of the MAU should be addressed in that they are quite limited when compared to the two larger MAGTFs: the MAB and the MAF. Currently MAUs deploy with a composite helicopter squadron, which provides assault support, vertical supply support, air command and control, and limited attack helicopter support. Some MAUs are deploying with a detachment of AV 8B Harrier attack jets, capable of vertical take-off and landings. This gain in attack aircraft causes a reduction in helicopter assets. However, the added capability of fixed wing attack aircraft and close air support is well worth it.

This concludes the discussion on the MAGTF concept and the three basic structures of the MAF, the MAB and the MAU. The flexibility of the MAGTF concept is apparent. This flexibility is the cornerstone of the MAGTF and provides the Marine Corps with a unique capability as a maritime force in executing the national objectives of the United States. Let us now focus our attention on the new enhancement of the MAU, the MAU (SOC).

The Marine Amphibious Unit (Special Operations Capable) MAU(SOC)

This section will describe the MAU (SOC), how it was developed, its organizational structure, its enhanced capabilities and employment options. In establishing the MAU

(SOC) the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) had three guiding principles; (1) the MAU (SOC) would not be a replacement for any current DOD special operations force, (2) the MAU (SOC) would be built around the current MAGTF concept of the MAU, (3) any operations conducted were to remain amphibious in nature, supporting or complementing other naval operations under the commander of the amphibious task force (CATF) or commander of the landing force (CLF) as appropriate.

Inception. In 1983, Deputy Secretary of Defense William H. Taft directed all services to review their special operations capability. The CMC charged the Commanding General of Fleet Marine Forces, Atlantic (CG, FMF Lant), (then LTGEN A.M. Gray, the current CMC) to examine the special operations capability of the Marine Corps. General Gray reported that the Marine Corps had an inherent capability to conduct a broad spectrum of special operations in a maritime environment and that improvements could be made to enhance special operations capabilities in the Marine Corps. In June of 1985 the CMC directed CG, FMF LANT to conduct a pilot program to enhance our special operations capability. The target of these enhancements was forward deployed MAUs.¹²

In December 1985, the first MAU (SOC) was fully trained and deployed from the east coast. After that two additional MAU (SOC)s deployed and in January of 1987, the CMC charged the Commanding General of Fleet Marine Forces Pacific, (CG, FMF PAC) to begin deployment of MAUs that are special operations capable from the west coast. In June of 1987, the first west coast MAU

(SOC) deployed to the western Pacific. By January of 1988 all MAUs deploying from the U.S. were deployed as MAU (SOC).

Organization. The forward deployed MAU (SOC) is an integral part of the amphibious task force. The enhanced capabilities of the MAU (SOC) and its effectiveness is dependant on a close relationship with the Navy arm of the amphibious team. The Navy ships or Amphibious Squadron (Phibron) must work closely with the MAU (SOC) at least six months prior to their deployment. Emphasis must be placed on CSI and other shipboard enhancements or alterations to ensure the proper naval support for the MAU (SOC). Integrated training is the key to successful preparation for the MAU development as Special Operations Capable (SOC).

As was specified by CMC in his initial guidance, the MAU (SOC) would be organized around the basic structure of the MAU. The MAU (SOC) is currently structured the same as the MAU as exhibited prior in this paper, however in order to carry out its enhanced functions some elements have been added to the structure of the MAU. The following are the units or detachments that are available to the FMF Commander for deployment as a part of the MAU (SOC) team.

1. Detachment (Det), Force Reconnaissance Company. This provides a pre-assault and deep reconnaissance capability through various insertion means. This Det should also receive specific training in the conduct of clandestine operations.

2. Det, Radio Battalion. Provides an enhanced

capability for signals intelligence collection and analysis.

3. Det, Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO). Provides fire support liaison and control to other services and allied forces.

4. Det, Marine Air Support Squadron (MASS). Provides limited communication/coordination capability for enhanced integration of air support into the MAU (SOC) scheme of maneuver.

5. Det, Interrogator Translator Team (ITT). Provides enhanced human intelligence support through interrogation, debriefing, and screening of those personnel considered as having intelligence value and through the translation and exploitation of captured documents and equipment.

6. Det, Force Imagery Interpretation Unit (FIIU). Provides enhanced imagery interpretation support.

7. Det, Counterintelligence Team (CIT). Provides counterintelligence support to the MAU (SOC) as well as human intelligence support and liaison with external intelligence agencies.

8. Det, Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion (LAAD). Provides enhanced air defense to the MAU (SOC) elements.

9. Det, Marine Light Attack Squadron (VMA). Provides organic MAU (SOC) close air support (CAS) capability by AV-8B aircraft. When appropriate shipping is not available, the Det may be placed on standby, prepared to deploy to the vicinity of the MAU (SOC) area of operations.

10. Det, Marine Aerial Refueler/Transport Squadron.

(VMGR). Provides refueling services for embarked helicopters and AV-8B's and other assault support tasks as required. The Det may be placed on standby, prepared to deploy as appropriate. Training coordination with the MAU during the predeployment cycle is considered essential.

11. Addition of these Dets should be consistent with the MAGTF employment concept with aviation units assigned to the air component commander and ground units assigned to the ground component commander.

12. The direct support artillery battery of the MAU (SOC) may be augmented with 105mm howitzers to increase the flexibility of artillery support, particularly in the conduct of artillery raids and support of long-range helicopter operations.

13. The Naval Special Warfare Detachment. Consists of SEALs normally attached to the Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON). Although not assigned to the MAU (SOC), it is necessary to closely integrate SEAL capabilities into the MAU (SOC) concept of operations, in order to take full advantage of SEAL special operations expertise and capabilities in the areas of reconnaissance, small boat operations, underwater operations, and demolitions. In addition, the SEAL detachment is capable of augmenting the MAU (SOC) by reconnaissance, direct action, and initial terminal guidance (ITG) beyond the high water mark.¹⁴

Again, it should be emphasized that the MAU (SOC) is an enhancement of the MAU. It has gained this enhancement through the addition of detachments of standard Marine Corps

organizational support units. This is a perfect example of the application of flexibility to the task organization of the MAGTF concept. With the addition of these special detachments, how have the capabilities of the MAU changed? This will be discussed in the next section as we address the enhanced capabilities of the MAU (SOC).

Enhanced Capabilities. MAU (SOC) training does not create a super-elite unit, but provides limited capability to conduct specialized operations in a maritime environment. More specifically, the Marine Corps has tasked the MAU (SOC) to organize, equip and train for the following special operations capabilities:

1. **Offensive Operations.** The amphibious raid is a doctrinally assigned mission of a MAU. It is the primary offensive special operations capability of the MAU (SOC). Amphibious raids are undertaken against targets of strategic or tactical importance. They aim to destroy or capture enemy personnel and materiel, or to confuse, deceive, or demoralize the enemy. The specific goal of the MAU (SOC) is to enhance the capability to conduct this doctrinal mission on short notice at night using insertion by helicopter, AAVs, rubber raiding craft, or other means. The capabilities and special skills necessary to conduct a successful night amphibious raid have significant application to most other conventional and special operation missions.¹⁷

2. Recovery Operations. Recovery operations include liberating prisoners of war, extracting personnel or sensitive items from enemy-controlled areas, and noncombatant evacuation operations.

(a). Clandestine Recovery Operations. These operations include liberating prisoners of war, extracting personnel or sensitive items from enemy controlled areas, and the tactical recovery of downed aircraft and personnel (TRAP) to include aircraft sanitization and advanced trauma life-support. TRAP is limited to overland operations of the amphibious force and must be able to be conducted in a hostile environment.

(b). Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO). These operations require the protection and extraction of noncombatants, and are politically sensitive in nature, requiring close coordination with the appropriate Department of State representatives. The MAU (SOC) enhancements focus on the ability to conduct this mission in a nonpermissive environment.

(c). In-Extremis Rescue

(1). In-extremis rescue falls under the category of recovery operations. In this context, an in-extremis rescue situation is an outside the continental U.S. crisis where failure to act will result in significant damage to U.S. interests (e.g., imminent death of a U.S. citizen or immediate destruction of U.S. property) prior to effective response by dedicated U.S. special purpose forces.

(2). The MAU (SOC) must possess a capability

to respond to specific in-extremis crisis situations. Since these situations are politically and militarily sensitive, it is essential that units which are tasked to conduct these missions be provided a high degree of personnel stability and training. In spite of this, it is not envisioned Marine units will train for these missions to the exclusion of their normally assigned missions.

(3). Support to Dedicated U.S. Special Operations Forces. This is a likely contingency for a MAU (SOC). It could require conducting initial reconnaissance, intelligence collection, target area security, providing a cordon or reaction/reinforcing unit, or additional fire support for such a force. The early establishment of liaison with national special operation forces and the ability to communicate with such forces while they are in route is absolutely essential to such operations.¹⁰

3. Other Special Mission Capabilities:

(a). Mobile Training Teams (MTT). The MAU (SOC) must be able to provide instruction to non-U.S. units on weapons, basic combat skills, limited maintenance training, and other organic capabilities. This includes operational training in the use of amphibious platforms and other related capabilities.

(b). Civil Affairs. The MAU (SOC) must be able to conduct civil affairs operations to include limited Medical/Dental Civil Affairs Program (MEDCAP/DENTCAP) visits, minor construction repairs of civilian facilities, briefing of

local civilian governmental authorities, support of local charitable/religious organizations, and prompt adjudication of any host nation claims.

(c). Security/Reinforcement Operations. The MAU (SOC) must possess the capability to analyze and conduct security operations to protect U.S. property and noncombatants in either a hostile or potentially hostile environment. As an example, Marines could reinforce a Marine Security Guard detachment during a deteriorating political situation in a Third World country where it appears hostile action may be taken against an embassy or consulate, and the host nation is unable to prevent such hostile action. This action could be taken as a prelude to, or in conjunction with, a noncombatant evacuation operation. Department of State coordination of these operations is required.

(d). Show of Force. The MAU (SOC), while embarked aboard amphibious shipping, must be prepared to engage in any form of "show of force" operation, to include turnaway landings or flyovers in support of U.S. national interests.

(e). Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT). A significant number of the operations described above could take place in an urban environment. The MAU (SOC) must be prepared to operate in such an environment, utilizing appropriate equipment and techniques.

(f). Tactical Military Deception Operations. The MAU (SOC) must be able to design and implement measures to mislead the enemy by distortion, feints, ruses, demonstrations,

or portrayals.¹⁹

4. Naval Special Warfare (NSW) Tasks. In conjunction with the above, these tasks include support for beach survey, underwater obstacle clearing, and demolitions. Close integration of NSW capabilities into the MAU (SOC) concept of operations in training and exercises is essential, if the capabilities of these assets are to be fully exploited.²⁰

5. Special Operations Capabilities the MAU (SOC) Does Not Possess:

- (a). Surgical counterterrorist hostage rescue.
- (b). Establishment of escape and evasion networks.
- (c). Psychological operations.
- (d). Sabotage.
- (e). Subversion.²¹

Training. One of the objectives of the MAU (SOC) is to be able to conduct three simultaneous company-sized raids by air assault, surface assault, or a combination of the two. The raids will be accomplished at night, without radio or electronic emissions, at extended ranges and with short notice.

A second primary objective is to be able to accomplish rapid mission planning. The specific target is to be able to plan to execute a mission within six hours of notification.

To accomplish these specific objectives an aggressive and detailed training program is required. The MAU (SOC) training is divided into three phases, a total of 26 weeks.

Phase I. A ten week block devoted to individual and small unit skills training. In this phase units concentrate on individual proficiency in such areas as; physical conditioning, rifle marksmanship, individual protective measures, small unit tactics and classroom instruction/indoctrination.

Phase II. A two week period for the initial integration of elements. This integration is essential to the success of the unit and requires coordination between the Air/Ground team. Staff training is emphasized in this phase and it ends with the successful completion of the GCE and ACE receiving their Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluation (MCCRES).

Phase III. In the final ten weeks of the training cycle the MAU concentrates on integration with the Navy. Joint planning and exercises are conducted. Extended raids are conducted and both Navy and Marine units sharpen their skill in preparing to meet the objectives as stated above. This phase culminates in a special operations capable exercise (SOCEX) at which time in MAU and Navy ARG are determined to be special operations capable.²²

Summary

The MAU (SOC) is a viable force for the nation as a maritime reaction force to crisis situations around the world. MAGTFs have always been uniquely qualified for a broad spectrum of missions in the maritime environment, especially when the situation calls for forced entry and/or insertion of heliborne or waterborne forces from the sea.²³

The MAU (SOC) was formed under the premise that it would enhance the Marine Corps' capability to conduct special operations in a maritime environment. It was designed to complement other service special operations, not duplicate them.

This initiative has gone another step closer to the integration of the Navy-Marine Team. The close coordination between the Marine MAU staff and the Phibron staff improves the ability to carry out their mission "in any clime and place".²⁴

The next chapter will discuss the latest "type" of warfare, the Low Intensity Conflict (LIC), followed by a comparison of the capabilities and missions of the MAU (SOC) and the requirements for LIC.

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CHAPTER 3

LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT (LIC)

Introduction

This chapter will discuss Low Intensity Conflict (LIC), where it began, why it is important, what it is and what the requirements are for the military in this environment.

LIC has recently become a popular topic of discussion in military and political circles. Many believe that LIC is the most likely form of military involvement in our near future. Some say we are preparing for the wrong war with our strong emphasis in Europe.

LIC can be many things to many people. To the young soldier or Marine involved in a firefight it is high intensity, regardless of the decision of the political or military strategist defining the situation as low intensity conflict. What may be a life and death struggle for some is a police action for others. Another popular discussion topic is the new term "military operations or actions short of war". Does this mean operations without a shot fired or does it mean operations involving troops in a situation in which war has not been declared? To understand LIC we must define the arena as precisely as possible. This chapter will attempt to clarify the definition and use of the term low intensity conflict as it will be used in this thesis.

Low Intensity Conflict Defined

Low Intensity Conflict has been officially defined by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Low intensity conflict is a limited political-military struggle to achieve political, military, social, economic, and psychological objectives. It is often protracted and ranges from diplomatic, economic, and psychosocial pressures through terrorism to insurgent war. Low intensity conflict is generally confined to a geographic area and is often characterized by constraints on the weaponry, tactics, and level of violence.¹

This definition does not help to truly understand the complexity of issues in LIC. First of all, LIC is not just a military operation with unconventional units or civil affairs personnel, but rather an environment within which various means are employed. LIC then, is not a military problem so much as a political and strategic problem. Col. Harry Summers, in his book On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context, points out in his review of the Vietnam war that it was not our tactics that "lost" the war, but our strategy or better yet, our lack of strategy.² Our strategy must be solid and complementary at all levels if we are to win in LIC. This means the political, economic, military, congressional and national will must be geared toward the same objective.

The difference between nuclear and unconventional war is rather straightforward, but it is much more difficult to separate conventional war and low-level conflict. Ernest Evans discusses the differences in his article "Wars Without Splendour" in Conflict Quarterly.³ First, low-level conflict involves the use of irregular troops, fighting over large geographic areas and

engaging in combat on intermittent occasions. Casualties are usually fewer in low-level conflict. The second important difference between conventional and low-level conflict is that a conventional conflict usually consists of two or more nations in battle. Low-level conflict is characterized by internal struggle with indirect actions occurring between external nations. Third, low-level conflict tends to be "low tech" with less use of massive firepower, such as artillery and air strikes. Fourth, low-level conflict is usually more manpower intensive rather than technology driven. Fighting involves infantry units with small arms rather than large armor or mechanized units. Finally, political factors are more important on a day to day basis. The ultimate objective in low-level conflict is to change a government or political system. The political dimension dominates all decisions.

Modern strategist, William J. Taylor, describes LIC based on four characteristics.* The first is that LIC is asymmetrical, it is characterized by an unconventional total commitment by the insurgents. Secondly, it is ambiguous, in that it is difficult to tell friends from enemies. The third characteristic is unconventional. The center of gravity is political and or social as opposed to military. Fourthly, LIC is protracted war and typified by wars of attrition.

Several authors have discussed LIC in terms of a spectrum of war. The basis of this spectrum philosophy is that LIC is the most likely conflict, while the least likely conflict is nuclear

Peace does not preclude war between other nations and is a likely precursor to the next two types of war, LIC and Limited War.

The next level of war is Low Intensity Conflict. Peters' definition of LIC focuses on insurgency and counterinsurgency warfare. This type of war may be a regionally based insurgency or an insurgency through the use of surrogates such as Nicaragua and El Salvador today. LIC may involve irregulars and guerilla forces struggling for power or it may involve vastly organized military forces with capability for sustained combat. Peters believes terrorism spans the entire breadth of war and may be just as likely in armed peace as in LIC. The key to success in LIC is expeditious application of power. Piecemeal approaches only prolong the conflict and favor the insurgent who, like a weightlifter, slowly builds his strength on ever-increasing amounts of weight.

Limited War is the involvement of superpowers in regional wars. Examples include the U.S. in Korea in 1952 and Vietnam in the later years of the war and the U.S.S.R. invasions of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Afghanistan in 1980. The problems for superpower involvement in Limited War are exemplified in these examples. Another problem with Limited War is the dilution of combat power by restricting participation and employment of strategic assets. Some say we lost Vietnam through our actions in Korea by not using nuclear power against the Chinese and demonstrating our resolution to the maintenance of freedom in Asia. All three of these kinds of war, Armed Peace, LIC and

Limited War, fall within the range of Low Intensity Conflict in some manner or another.

Earlier we discussed the notion of military actions short of war. Is LIC war? How does it compare to actions short of war? Colonel Richard Swain discusses these issues in his article in Military Review.⁶ Swain concludes that LIC is not war but an activity of a government to resolve national conflicts. Further, the use of military forces are twofold, first they may be used in war to carry out political objectives and second, they may be used in actions short of war. However, combat operations may take place under both circumstances.

General Paul Gorman, former CINC of U.S. Southern Command, believes that LIC is "war turned upside down". Military operations in LIC require use of security assistance and intelligence first and holding firepower and maneuver for later stages.⁷

Lieutenant Colonel John Fulton addresses the issue of LIC and war.⁸ He believes LIC must be treated as a new phenomenon and should be studied and treated with new ideas and resources. Is it new or have we focused our efforts away from it? LIC is not a topic which can be generalized, but it must be viewed differently in each occurrence. We cannot apply the same rules in each case. Fulton describes a difference between war and LIC. First of all, LIC is a Third World malady. It tends to be engaged in by lesser developed countries of the world. Second, the means of waging LIC are different than war in the

conventional sense. In LIC the most usable commodity is people and not material. Time is also important in LIC, as the more protracted conflict tends to favor the insurgent. LIC attempts to involve the entire population in the conflict. There is no separation between warriors and noncombatants. The objectives and final ends of the insurgents is the broad change in society and a realigning of political power. Unconditional surrender or total victory is the goal in conventional war. Last, violence takes on a whole new meaning in LIC. Terrorism, assassination, urban violence, hostage-taking are all tactics in LIC and do not fit the "rules" of conventional war. There is no Geneva Convention for LIC as far as the insurgents are concerned. This became a key point in negotiations for the return of our POWs from North Vietnam. The North Vietnamese were not at war with the U.S., therefore the status of "POWs" was relegated to common criminals or murderers. One might say this is mere rhetoric but, we cannot afford to face such a situation again in the future. We must learn from the past and from this new "phenomenon" called LIC.

The JCS definition describes LIC as an environment including political, economic, geographic and social considerations. The military response to LIC is not and should not be the first and only one. However, when the response to LIC is determined to be military it should be a fully supported introduction of all available and appropriate assets to accomplish the task.

The discussion and definition of LIC in this thesis will be

based on the doctrine in U.S. Army Field Circular 100-20, Low Intensity Conflict. LIC in this discussion will include all conflict below mid intensity to include; terrorism, insurgency, peacekeeping and contingency response missions; but does not include protracted engagements of enemy regular forces. These specific operations, will be individually addressed as general categories of LIC later in the chapter.

The important lesson from all the literature is that there is no singular definition of LIC. The critical point is to understand the environment of LIC, and the fact that each situation must be viewed based on its own internal and external factors. LIC may not be war, but to the fighting man on the line it surely is not peace. Next we will address the origins of LIC and this new level of conflict.

Origins and History

Insurgency or guerilla warfare can be traced back to the Napoleonic era and the Spanish popular resistance to Napoleon's armies. However, the best use of this type of warfare was developed in the Far East by Mao Tse Tung and the Chinese communists in the 1920s. We shall discuss some early examples of LIC and then look at recent occurrences.

The Philippine Insurrection of 1901. On 25 April 1898 the U.S. declared war on Spain. Just over three months later the U.S. had won the Spanish-American War. With that victory came the decision to colonize the Philippines, a former territory of

the Spanish. General Emilio Aguinaldo led the Philippines in a revolt against the U.S. attempt at colonizing and was soundly defeated by U.S. forces by the end of 1899. The U.S. believed that all fighting was over and that opposition ceased to exist. This was not true. Aguinaldo realized the situation and knew he could not fight head to head with the U.S. forces. He dispersed his forces and established districts of defense. His troops shed their uniforms and began training for a new type of war. In their secure base camps they built up supplies of arms, food and trained new recruits from the countryside. They began with an anti-U.S. propaganda campaign, used terrorism to deter dissent and began using hit and run tactics against U.S. forces. Aguinaldo was keenly aware of the anti-imperialist movement in the U.S. and was prepared to fight a protracted war in order to make the U.S. lose interest in the Philippines.

In the beginning of this insurgency U.S. troops were widely dispersed and in small numbers and were unable to conduct effective field operations. General Franklin Bell developed a counterinsurgency strategy that has become the basis for doctrine today. General Bell knew his enemy and what it would take to defeat them. His plan was to isolate the guerilla forces, deny them access to and eliminate their base of support and destroy their means and will to resist. These objectives were enumerated politically, economically, socially and militarily. The General believed a short but aggressive campaign would cost the U.S. less and end the campaign sooner. It seems General Bell was aware of

the political ramifications back in the states. His plan was designed not only to defeat the rebel forces but to eliminate the infrastructure which supported the rebels. In six months General Bell and his brigade had managed to isolate the insurgency from the population through his establishment of protection zones. He neutralized the insurgent leadership and organization through military and political control of the local populace that supported the insurgency. He successfully mobilized all elements of political, social, economic and military power to neutralize the insurgent and motivate the populace. His decentralized tactical organizations proved most effective in an aggressive offensive campaign which seized the tactical initiative and led to ultimate victory with the surrender of the insurgent leadership and an end to the war.* This scenario is quite similar to those we have seen in recent years: an insurgency deriving its power from terrorism of the local populace, a difficulty separating the insurgent from the populace and a dedicated insurgent group, willing to fight a protracted war. These characteristics have the makings of trouble for any force attempting to end an insurgency. The Philippines example points out the need for a clear strategy and the support and willingness of the country to counter an insurgency. The next discussion will be of a successful counterinsurgency effort in Malaya in the post WW II period.

Counterinsurgency in Malaya 1948-1960. Prior to WW II many Chinese immigrated to Malay. These immigrants eventually became

the foundation for insurgency in the country of Malay following WW II. The insurgents were members of the Malay Communist Party (MCP), an outcropping of the Communist Chinese success in mainland China under Mao Tse Tung. The insurgency was planned as a classical Asian struggle with three stages of war. However, because of the inability of the MCP to organize, the effective response by the Malay government with the support of the British, and the failure to gain support outside of the Chinese population of Malay the insurgency never got beyond the first stage. The reasons for the success in this counterinsurgency can be applied to our doctrine for LIC today. First, the British realized the most important aspect of the crisis was to stabilize the Malay government. They accomplished this by subordinating military concerns to civilian political leadership. Next, the decision was made to organize all intelligence operations under the Malay police. This helped to break the insurgent's grip on the population. The British coordinated all civic action with the military. This is the same tactic used by U.S. Marines in many of their involvements in Central America and again in Vietnam. An interesting restriction of the forces was a decision to use minimal firepower against rebel forces, especially in populated areas. They believed artillery and air support killed very few guerrillas, but provided the enemy with excellent propaganda. The emphasis was on small unit actions, with squad-sized ambushes. Soldiers were placed in a geographic area and kept there to become familiar with the terrain and the enemy in their

assigned area. Finally, this was indeed a protracted conflict, over twelve years, and the British and Malays realized that they must remain committed if they were to win. This contrasts with the U.S. philosophy to hit hard with maximum force to destroy the enemy before the Congress and the will of the people turn against the action. The British established a plan, stuck with it and were successful.¹⁰ The next discussion looks at the Asian Marxist Insurgency Doctrine as implemented by Mao Tse Tung of China and Vo Nguyen Giap in Vietnam.

Asian Marxist Insurgency Doctrine. The basic theme of this doctrine is how a peasant army can defeat the army of a modern industrialized nation. Mao developed three stages of war to accomplish this task. The first stage is guerilla warfare. The second stage is mobile warfare which uses regular forces to annihilate the enemy. Last, the third stage was positional warfare sought to engage the enemy in a war of attrition. Mao believed guerilla warfare was constant and that guerilla forces were to be used throughout all stages of war to aid in both attrition and annihilation of the enemy. The primary objective of the guerilla is to force the enemy to defend everywhere, thus making him vulnerable to defeat. The final thrust in Mao insurgent doctrine was to force the opponent to have to fight insurgents and regular forces across a great expanse of territory, in essence to divide and conquer. The first phase of insurgency could be described as LIC, while the second and third phases are mid intensity conflict. The problem lies in the fact,

that the guerilla does not leave the battlefield and the opponent finds himself fighting both a low and mid intensity conflict simultaneously. Mao used this doctrine to great success in his climb to power in China. General Giap also used this doctrine with great success in Vietnam. Guerilla warfare in South Vietnam tied up innumerable assets while NVA regulars concentrated attacks elsewhere. This battlefield depth neutralized the mobility advantage of the U.S. and RVN forces and forced a reactionary environment in which the enemy maintained the initiative.¹¹

Historically we have seen how LIC has developed and spread across the globe. It has not been limited to just insurgency warfare. In the next section we will examine several recent cases of LIC, to include terrorism, peacekeeping and contingency response actions.

Highjack of the Achille Lauro. As we have shown, LIC takes on many faces. Terrorism as a means to force change has become all too common. How to counter this new method of war is a difficult question. The highjacking of the cruise ship, the Achille Lauro, is a good example of the problems and some solutions in countering terrorist activity. The ship, with 400 passengers aboard, was highjacked by Palestinian terrorists. The terrorists demanded that Israel release 50 Palestinian prisoners. The terrorists killed a U.S. citizen aboard the ship. The Egyptian government interceded and pledged safety of the terrorists if they would release the hostages and the ship. The

terrorists agreed and were flown out of Egypt destined for Tunisia. The U.S. had confirmed the death of a U.S. citizen by the terrorists and intervened by forcing the getaway plane down in Sigonella, Sicily, by fighter and intercept aircraft off the U.S. aircraft carrier Saratoga. The terrorists were detained and tried by the Italian government. Incidentally, the ringleader of the terrorists managed to escape from Italy to Yugoslavia. This case points out the depth of counterterrorist operations. Involvement must begin at the highest levels, in the White House itself and be coordinated across many lines. The planning and coordination of the military action was critical. Intelligence played a major role in finding the getaway aircraft and ensuring the success of the mission. From the first indication of the highjacking to the capture of the terrorists only five days elapsed. Our ability to respond in such a timely manner was shown to be the key to the success of this operation. The U.S. must be prepared to respond quickly in future terrorist actions.

The French Experience in LIC in the 1980s. LIC is global and not just limited to the U.S. We can and must learn from other nation's experiences. In the 1980s the French have been involved in three LIC operations: the peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, the Chadian defense of Libyan incursion, and the recent minesweeping operations in the Red Sea. In Lebanon, French forces were part of the Multinational Security Force in Beirut. Their missions included: separating combatants, street clearing of mines, civilian population security and training the Lebanese

army. The French were committed to Chad to act as a defensive shield to prevent Libyan incursion into Chad. Their specific mission was training of the Chadian troops and reconnaissance of the northern Chad border. In the Red Sea, French minesweepers were deployed to clear the Lower Suez and Red Sea for the reestablishment of free-flowing maritime traffic to maintain lines of communication to Western Europe. Each of these operations was successful because of their effective application of two key principles; first, the prevention of crises and second, the maintenance of a retaliation capability. The crisis prevention goal was obtained through the effective deployment of forces consistent with the circumstances. France has established a Rapid Action Force to meet the second objective. This force is comprised of the 9th Amphibious Assault Division and the 11th Parachute Division, both capable and prepared for rapid intervention by air, land, and sea. The lessons learned from the French in these operations suggest that flexibility, innovation and professionalism are key for military success in LIC. Secondly, civil-military cooperation on all levels is the most important determinant of overall success.¹²

Military Assistance in El Salvador. The U.S. is currently assisting the government of El Salvador with military assistance in the form of advisors for training and tactics. A recent article by the former commander of the U.S. Army Element, Military Group, El Salvador, brings forward some of the problems the U.S. has in dealing with this level of LIC.¹³ He states that

the Army is still tied to the "European Threat" and is unprepared for LIC operations, both in philosophy and training. To be effective we must have advisors that are capable of performing in security advisory and training positions in the host country. We should be sending our best trained LIC experts to assist our allies. In fact, we are not doing that but are sending leaders who are trying to create a miniature U.S. defense establishment in El Salvador. Other problems in this environment are the arbitrary personnel restrictions imposed by the Congress and the politics of providing sufficient funds to support the operation. These issues of domestic U.S. politics only confuse the people we are supporting. These problems are reminiscent of the mid-1960s and continue to emphasize the need for the cooperation and coordination of all levels of our government.

These cases or examples of LIC, its origins and history, have established a starting point for understanding the complexity of the problems and difficulties in dealing with the many faces of LIC. These examples have discussed the tactical and operational considerations of LIC. The next section will discuss the strategic implications and concerns for LIC.

Current Implications for U.S. Policy

What is the cause of this new wave of conflict at the lower ends of the spectrum? Many U.S. strategists have placed the blame solidly on the shoulders of the Soviet Union. This new

Third World conflict has its roots in basic Marxist philosophy. The Soviet Union and the rest of Western Europe have been at peace for over 40 years. This "peaceful" period has allowed the Soviets to expand their support for "wars of national liberation". This has proven to be a low cost method of extending their power to weaken their adversaries and to counter Western gains in the Third World. These conflicts have been expensive in terms of manpower to the Third World nations but has been inexpensive in terms of technological and materiel support by the Soviets and their surrogates. This Soviet or Marxist expansion and exploitation must be contained.¹⁴ This mission has fallen on the countries of the free world, with the U.S. taking the lead.

The "Reagan Doctrine" is designed to meet the Soviet challenge.¹⁵ The President's thrust has been to resist the direct and surrogate prongs of the Soviet Union's expansion in areas such as Asia, Africa, and Central America. The Doctrine calls for support to those forces resisting the Soviet and surrogate advances. This philosophy did not begin with Reagan but has its roots in the Kennedy Administration in 1961, when the President reoriented the military and the strategic concerns of the nation to counterinsurgency forces in Southeast Asia. We might trace the problems we have inherited in our lack of involvement to the "Nixon Doctrine" of 1969.¹⁶ President Nixon believed the host government bore the primary responsibility for providing manpower for its own defense. This, perhaps, may have

been a proper approach to in the 1960s, but it sent a message to the rest of the world that the U.S. was returning to its old isolationist ways. This signal prompted Soviet actions that we must counter today as proposed and executed through the Reagan Doctrine.

This is very fragile ground that we tread. There is a delicate balance that must be maintained in shaping U.S. policies that will effectively counter this Soviet expansion while still maintaining peace.¹⁷

There are many hurdles that stand in the way of our containment policy. Professor John Moore has identified five specific factors that hinder our response to Soviet and surrogate expansionism. First, is the problem of the government and society's genuine willingness to respond to the wishes of people seeking peace. Do we really think that if we would have stopped the bombing of Hanoi and the mining of HaiPhong harbor that the North Vietnamese would have ended their attack on South Vietnam? Yet that was their expressed statement in the press and many Americans believed them. Second is the conflicting views of public opinion in our democratic society. The media, television, radio and newspapers offer a rainbow of opinions on the actions or lack of action of our government response. A third difficulty for us is the "checks and balances" system of government in which the Congress must approve a particular course or policy. This system tends to complicate the execution of foreign policy. Fourth, there is a major gap between the knowledge of the

Executive branch leaders awareness of subversive and insurgent activities and the general public's knowledge of the subject. This gap is due largely because of the sensitivity of the collection means and the inability to make this information available to the general public. The last factor described by Moore is the effect of totalitarian propaganda and disinformation. This tactic was applied on the U.S. people in Vietnam and continues to be applied today. The Sandinista regime in Central America has over 200 pro-Sandinista solidarity groups in the U.S. today.¹⁰

Two noted General Officers have addressed shortcomings in our ability to deal with LIC and the Soviet expansionism. Former Marine General Victor H. Krulak discussed our need to prepare for these "little wars." We must relearn the fundamentals and principles of fighting guerilla wars. He emphasizes the offensive principle of war. The pivotal factor is intelligence, which in turn rests on popular support. He cites our success in El Salvador as a recent example of how we must gather our strength and energy to oust unwelcome foes. General Krulak demonstrates the importance of the sanctuary in these "little wars", as was the case in Vietnam, where sanctuary was found in Laos and Cambodia. We must not allow that to happen again as we must be aware of the potential damage that may result from such constraints.¹¹

General John R. Galvin, as Commander of U.S. Southern Command, points out two weaknesses in our efforts to stem Soviet

activity. The first deals with the emphasis by our military leaders. Our Colonels and Generals spend too much time with day to day work and thereupon, leave the strategic thinking to professors and journalists. Our officers must be able to look beyond today's tasks and must prepare for tomorrow. He believes this may be a reason why we have failed to properly prepare for our most likely battle, that of LIC. Second, General Galvin believes we have missed the mark in our measure of effectiveness in counterinsurgency operations. Instead of body count or terrain captured we must focus on the real objective which is political and social, not military. The emphasis should be on the number of people we turn back in support of the host government, or the number of guerrillas remaining as opposed to the number killed. The emphasis should be on the society and not the military.²⁰

We cannot blame all instances of conflict on the Soviet Union and their surrogates. There are several other causes of LIC that should be addressed, which in their own right pose problems to our involvement. Cultural differences such as religion in Iran, Iraq and Northern Ireland and competition for minerals and energy resources as in the Middle East and Africa are just two examples of other causes of the LIC environment. Nuclear proliferation has diffused war to low levels in order to avoid nuclear holocaust. Under each of these examples are many other factors which may bring on LIC or some form of conflict.²¹

What are some of the implications of LIC to world politics

and stability? LIC increases the danger of escalation of regional conflicts. It can lead to realignment of countries in the Soviet-American confrontation. LIC can aggravate state-to-state relations. As we shall see in the next section, LIC has established some new missions for the world's armed forces. The Soviet Union itself is in the midst of a counterinsurgency effort in Afghanistan. Other nations are involved in such campaigns: Angola, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and Vietnam. In the foreseeable future many nations will be confronted with Low Intensity Conflict.²²

We have discussed the origins of LIC and some past and recent examples of LIC. The strategic implications are vast and complicated. This next section will discuss specific categories of LIC. This will help in future analysis and comparison of the requirements in combatting LIC.

General Categories of LIC

Low Intensity Conflict may take on many forms. We shall discuss five such forms and then correlate these to general missions for military forces.²³

Insurrection. A group of revolutionaries attempt to overthrow the government of a country by means of a popular uprising. The revolutionaries expect the uprising to be rapid and decisive. An example was the successful 1952 uprising in La Paz, Bolivia, which brought the National Liberation Movement to power.

Guerilla Warfare. If a group of revolutionaries are not powerful enough they may instigate a guerilla war. This type of warfare is typified by a prolonged struggle for government control through the use of the people and by discrediting the government. Time is the key difference that distinguishes an insurrection from guerilla warfare. An example of guerilla war is the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the fall of the Somoza regime in 1978.

Terrorism. Terrorists try to achieve their goals by terrorizing the government and their supporters. They hope to make them afraid that they may be the next victims of violence. There are too many examples of this tactic today, such as the assassination of key political officials in El Salvador, the Philippines and the Middle East.

Border Friction. Many times violence occurs along some known or contested border area. Sometimes these are generated by national, religious or ethnic differences. Examples of recent border clashes are Israel and Syria, Turkey and Cyprus, Iran and Iraq, and China and Vietnam.

Coup d'Etat. In a coup, the government's own military forces attempt to overthrow the government. The time involved in a coup is usually short, however, if it becomes prolonged it may evolve into civil war. The ousting of King Farouk in Egypt by Colonel Nassar was a coup, as was the 1973 overthrow of the government of Salvador Allende in Chile.

These five forms are not always independent occurrences but

may happen in consonance with one another. In most cases of LIC there is one or more of these five types of conflict. The overthrow of President Marcos in the Philippines was an insurrection by the people and a coup by the military, not even considering the guerilla war being conducted by the New Peoples Army in the midst of it all. We can see how these matters become very complicated and require detailed analysis and understanding of the situation.

There are many solutions to dealing militarily with these forms of LIC. This paper will limit the discussion to four basic missions for military forces: foreign internal defense (FID), terrorism counteraction, peacekeeping operations, and contingency operations, as found in U.S. Army FC 100-20, Low Intensity Conflict. The next four sections will deal with each of these individually.

Foreign Internal Defense (FID)

The JCS defines FID as "participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness and insurgency."⁴

FID begins with an assessment by the country team, usually led by the ambassador, of the nation's needs for internal defense. Once a need for U.S. assistance is determined and the host nation agrees to the support, approval is sought through the National Command Authority (NCA). Upon NCA approval assistance

is provided through many means. The military may be tasked to provide security assistance. A Security Assistance Organization (SAO) may be established to accomplish the tasks or Mobile Training Teams (MTT) may be brought in on a temporary basis. The primary role of these two organizations is to train indigenous forces. If an insurgency requires further U.S. involvement, the U.S. could provide equipment, advisors and support for security assistance forces. Should the situation deteriorate and the further existence of the government be in jeopardy, the host nation could request introduction of combat, combat service (CS) or combat service support (CSS) units. It is not unlikely in FID that CS or CSS units may be employed prior to employment of combat forces. FID does not have to be an escalating program, but should be based upon the situation and the host nation requirements. In this context, FID is tailored to counterinsurgency and security force operations.²⁸

Terrorism Counteraction

There are two aspects of terrorism counteraction. The first is Antiterrorism which protects against terrorist activity. The second is Counterterrorism which consists of offensive action against possible terrorist attack. Antiterrorism is based on individual and unit awareness of the terrorist threat. This protection is based on a continuous appreciation of the terrorist threat and development of a security posture in response to that threat. This is done by reducing access to likely targets, and

by using physical security measures and personal protection, making the cost to the terrorist prohibitive. Counterterrorism involves the use of specially trained military units striking the terrorist prior to commission of a terrorist act. These missions can be either pre-emptive provided with proper intelligence and target location, or reactive once a terrorist incident has begun.²⁶

Peacekeeping Operations

Peacekeeping operations are "military operations conducted in support of diplomatic efforts to achieve, restore or maintain peace in areas of potential or actual conflict".²⁷ Peacekeeping operations may take on many faces. They may be categorized based on many factors: (1) are the forces multinational or unilateral, (2) are the components armed or unarmed, (3) is the mission short term or long term, (4) is the requirement for 40 or 400 troops? There are primarily two types of missions in peacekeeping operations; they are cease-fire operations or law and order maintenance. Each mission requires considerable and detailed analysis of the organization and control of the forces. Peacekeeping operations are based on the idea that force should only be used for self-defense. The problem therein lies between the training of the military man as opposed to the policeman. Another primary consideration then is proper education and rules of engagement tempered with reason. This problem can be found at all levels of command, from the commanding officer to the

National Command Authority. Peacekeeping forces must be provided clear cut missions and authority to carry out that mission. When the peacekeeping mission turns to a mission of self-defense our leadership must reevaluate the situation and be prepared to change accordingly. At times peacekeeping forces may be called to react to a rapidly changing situation which would require their direct action. These situations are referred to as peacemaking, where the forces must fight their way into the middle of the aggressors and then force the peace. This is like stepping in between two heavy-weight boxers in the middle of the third round as opposed to your involvement prior to the starting bell. Neutrality is imperative on the part of the peacemaker.

Peacetime Contingency Operations

These operations are "politically sensitive military operations characterized by the short term rapid projection or employment of forces in conditions short of conventional war, e.g., strike, raid, rescue, recovery, demonstration, show of force, noncombatant evacuation, unconventional warfare and intelligence operations".²⁰ Of course many and all of these operations could be conducted during a period of war, but we have limited the discussion of these operations to peacetime as it would apply under conditions of LIC. Recent examples of such operations would be the evacuation of Saigon and Phnom Penh in 1975, the rescue of the Mayaguez crew in 1975 and the Grenada operation in 1983. This type of operation in some cases such as

raids and evacuations require detailed planning and the use of specially trained forces. However some missions such as show of force may not require any special training. The most important factor is the need to deal with political or other non-military organizations.

This section has addressed the four basic missions of U.S. military forces in LIC as identified in U.S. Army FC 100-20, Low Intensity Conflict. The next section will deal more specifically with the requirements of a military organization to combat LIC.

Requirements to Combat LIC

We have identified LIC as a special type of war which has some irregular considerations as compared to conventional war. In this section we will address some of these differences in regard to combatting LIC.

Conventional Forces. Can any type of military force be successful in LIC operations? If the response to LIC is swift with the injection of overwhelming combat power, regular conventional forces may be sufficient to defeat the threat. However, the requirement for special capability forces will normally be the case, as LIC tends to be protracted conflict.²⁰ This does not mean we should use only special forces in LIC. Many conventional units have much to offer as we will discuss later in this section. One of the important factors when planning on the force to use in LIC is the size and type of employment. LIC requires small unit operations with an emphasis

on leadership at the small unit level. Low visibility intervention forces may be the key to successful operations in some nations. As previously mentioned in some cases just sending a military signal can be effective in deterring LIC.²⁰

Special Operations Forces. The term special operations forces as used here is not limited to Army special forces. It encompasses forces that train specifically for requirements of LIC. Today, U.S. forces fall into the "defensive habit" when faced with terrorist activity. We must be able to adequately respond to state supported terrorism. Bruce Hoffman, a Rand Corporation analyst, has reviewed over 100 commando type raids. His conclusion is that the U.S. must develop an array of inexpensive responses to keep terrorist attacks from forcing the U.S. to escalate militarily but enable it to take action against terrorist activities. The use of commando warfare and raids by small groups of men, well trained, with good intelligence sources, using mobility, stealth, deception and surprise can achieve this objective of countering the terrorist threat.²¹ Special operations forces may also be employed to specifically target the key centers of gravity in an insurgency. That target may be a particular person or physical structure, based on the situation.²²

Training. Preparation for LIC takes on new meaning for U.S. forces. The orientation centers around a new perspective. The key factor is the political nature of LIC, as opposed to mere war fighting skills. Units must be trained, organized and equipped

to carry out the task. Commanders and staff officers must be properly educated to be capable of advising the government and its agencies on how to conduct the campaign.³³ Interservice and international training is imperative. We must develop a close understanding of the host nation, its functioning and apply this to our own problems of joint interoperability.

Equipment. Our equipment must be able to adapt to Third World geography and terrain. In these countries we find few cross country roads. This means we must have cheap, simple trucks in sufficient quantity to support the operations. More trucks means more roads and new road construction. As we will also mention later under air power, we need to review our aircraft mix. Lightweight infantry weapons and rugged automatic weapons are needed in LIC. The shotgun has proved very useful in close-in situations. Again, the emphasis is not on massive firepower, but on lightweight rapid response weapons. The science and technology of subsistence products is important. We must have rations that are spoil-resistant. Potable water will be a large concern in most Third World environs.³⁴ The list is inexhaustive, but this section has addressed some of the issues that must be considered in preparing for LIC.

Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations. These two requirements may be the most important of all. They are force multipliers in LIC, as artillery and air support are in conventional operations. Civil Affairs focus is on people. In order to mitigate or eliminate an insurgency we must remove from

the insurgent "the sea to swim in" or the people from which he gains his support. The U.S. must have a long-term country specialist program if it is to succeed in LIC in Third World nations. LIC is a battle over ideals, ideas, hopes, frustrations, deprivations, fears and expectations. Civil affairs and psychological operations are critical in winning this battle. Where is the U.S. today? Most of our civil affairs and psychological operations forces are in the reserve component. If we are to win at LIC we must commit ourselves to permanent, long-term country specialists in key areas of the Third World.³⁸

Intelligence. Effective intelligence operations in LIC require the organization of a committee or team at each level of government with intra-government liaison of primary concern. An all source intelligence center should be established. The use of host police forces rather than military forces is one of the best approaches for gathering intelligence. Of primary importance is the acquisition of human intelligence, all others are secondary. Training of host nation teams and forces is required. All soldiers must realize their importance as intelligence collectors both on and off duty. Results of intelligence efforts should be measured, but not in body counts. More effective measures are an increase in the number of voluntary reportings, or number of insurgents defecting. Many indicators of guerilla activity are available. For example, an increase in thefts or smuggling may indicate a shortage of certain supply items of the insurgents. Every effort should be made to ensure the safety of prisoners or

defectors. Poor treatment of prisoners discourages voluntary surrendering of insurgents. Proper treatment and education will yield greater results in the long run. Counterintelligence is also very important. Plans must be made and training conducted to provide proper security of information, personnel, property and signals.²⁶

Air Power. Current doctrine and equipment of the U.S. Air Force is designed for conventional use in Europe. The use of high speed, high performance aircraft in the LIC environment is generally counterproductive. These lessons were learned in Oman in 1971 and have been learned by the Soviets in Afghanistan. We need slow planes directed by ground observers with an understanding of the situation. Again the point that comes to mind is the trade-off between firepower and effective political/social success. Helicopters are not the answer as they tend to be too expensive, have a short time on station and are maintenance intensive. And as observed in Afghanistan they make good SAM targets. The acquisition of advanced surface-to-air missiles by many Third World countries adds to the problems of helicopter employment in LIC. However, air power can be helpful in strategic or operational lift inter-theater or intra-theater, as well as intelligence gathering, reconnaissance, resupply and troop movement. Air power stresses maneuver and mobility over political activity. The military alone will not achieve political ends.²⁷

Logistics. Logistics serve two purposes in LIC. First,

they can be used to assist friendly nations threatened by low intensity operations without the commitment of U.S. combat forces. Second, logistics will provide support for U.S. forces deployed in LIC. Logistics may provide equipment, spare parts, subsistence and other support such as: medical, construction, mobility or civic action programs. Logistics may be offered either before or after an insurgency attempt. The U.S. may offer to assist in evacuating casualties, with mortuary services, food preparation and distribution, road repair and handling refugees and displaced persons. There is much that our logistics units can do prior to or after the introduction of combat units.²²

National Organization. The U.S. has recently established an office in the Pentagon to address the problems of LIC: The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD/SOLIC). This is a good start for the Defense Department, but as we have mentioned, LIC is a many faceted concept with strong political, social, economic and intelligence requirements. What national organization is coordinating the efforts of the State Department, the Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Commerce and other governmental agencies who may be involved in planning or executing LIC? Right now only the President has the authority for this coordination and control through the National Security Agency. This is an area that will require a great deal more attention in the future if we are going to be prepared to combat LIC. Our service schools devote too little effort on LIC,

and spend most of the time in our "comfortable wars" where we know the enemy. Our service educational system must face the need to develop and sustain the institutional elements, the concepts and the ongoing educational programs required to make LIC a serious component in our strategy."

This chapter has discussed the concept of Low Intensity Conflict, some of the forms and requirements to combat LIC. In the next chapter, the Marine Amphibious Unit (Special Operations Capable) will be compared to the requirements for operating in a Low Intensity Conflict.

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CHAPTER 4

THE ROLE OF THE MAU (SOC) IN LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the role of the MAU (SOC) in Low Intensity Conflict. It will begin with a broad discussion of the Marine Corps participation in LIC. The next section will compare MAU (SOC) capabilities to the requirements of military forces in LIC. Finally, the last section will detail the specific role of the MAU (SOC) in LIC operations.

The U.S. Marine Corps and Low Intensity Conflict

Before focusing on the MAU (SOC), we should look at the Marine Corps and its place in LIC. Many recent authors have addressed this issue; this section will summarize current thinking regarding the role of the Marines in this type of warfare.

Historical Use of the Marine Corps in LIC. The Marine Corps has been a major force as a political instrument since its inception in 1775. In Force Without War, the Brookings Institute studied the use of the military in operations short of war between 1946 and 1975. In the study, the Marine Corps was used in 77 out of 215 incidents, twice as many times as the Army. The Marines are "equipped, trained, and organized for quick reaction,

limited operations and flexible use".¹ The forward deployment of Marine forces has been one of the key reasons for their use.

In 1976, another Brookings Institute study, Where Does the Marine Corps Go From Here?, addressed the future of the Marine Corps in the post-Vietnam era. The study focused on the Marine Corps mission of amphibious warfare and stated that the need for the Marines has diminished. The study revived a continuing question of the viability of a separate armed service for amphibious warfare. The authors recommended dismantling of the Marine Corps and incorporation into the other services.² This study failed to address the utility of the Marine Corps in past incidents as discussed by Blechman and Kaplan, in Forces Without War.

By 1987, Jeffrey Record, author of the Brookings analysis apparently changed his mind on the utility of the Marine Corps when he wrote, "the principal mission of the USMC is amphibious operations, but we cannot ignore history and the immense non-amphibious contribution of the USMC." As many authors have pointed out, the Marine Corps has an unsurpassed readiness for combat. The Marine Corps is trained, structured and deployed to respond quickly to sudden and unexpected crisis.³

The Marine Corps Approach to LIC. The first doctrinal attempt at defining the use of Marines in LIC was the Small Wars Manual, printed in 1940. The Small Wars Manual defines a small war as "operations undertaken under executive authority, wherein military force is combined with diplomatic pressure in the

internal or external affairs of another state whose government is unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life and of such interests as are determined by the foreign policy of our nation".⁴ This definition of small wars fits into our current definition of LIC. Since 1940, the Marines have participated in many "small wars". However, the Marine Corps has failed to develop and validate new doctrine based on recent experiences in such places as Lebanon, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, Cambodia and Grenada.⁵

Recent comments by the Commandant of the Marine Corps are revitalizing this concern and Marines expect greater emphasis on doctrine and training for "small wars" and LIC. General Gray says: "It is the Third World, the so-called low intensity conflict arena, where we are most likely to be committed in this decade...You had better break out the manuals and books on how to fight in this arena."⁶

Marine Corps Forces and LIC. We have established the historical precedent for use of Marines in LIC. Several recent authors add to the application of Marines in LIC operations. In US Policy and Low Intensity Conflict, the authors identify the MAGTF as a viable force for LIC, through the use of the combined employment of air, land and sea forces.⁷

Six military officers on a fellowship at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, have conducted extensive research on the subject of LIC. Their draft report addresses the military organization and roles in LIC. The

authors discuss the differences between conventional and special operations forces, which is a comfortable distinction for most of us. However, we do not have dedicated LIC forces. Most special operations forces are well suited for LIC. The MAU (SOC) is included in the special operations category. The problem is deciding which conventional forces are "LIC capable". The research by these authors recommend the following conventional forces for LIC missions:

Conventional Forces

- Surface/Subsurface Naval Forces (USN)
- Marine Amphibious Unit (USMC)
- Military Airlift Command Assets (USAF)
- Tactical Air Command Assets (USAF)
- Strategic Air Command Bombers and Tankers (USAF)
- Military Police Units (USMC/USA)
- Engineer Battalions (USMC/USA)
- Construction Battalions (USN)
- Medical Units (USAF/USN/USA)
- Communications Units (ALL SVCS)
- Military Intelligence Units (ALL SVCS)

The article excludes US Army Airborne, Air-Assault and Light Infantry Divisions because they are too large and not capable of long term independent operation. If such forces are used, our employment would change from LIC to conventional warfare. The Marine Amphibious Units are included because they are continuously afloat, bring with them everything needed to operate in LIC, and are able to withdraw quickly."

Ernest Evans in Wars Without Splendor, The US Military and Low Level Conflict, proposes force structure for LIC. Evans would disagree with the authors above in regards to the use of airborne, air-assault and light infantry divisions of the U.S.

Army. These forces have been used in the past in the LIC environment and would provide a valuable LIC force if specifically dedicated to prepare for LIC. Evans agrees on the use of the Marine Corps as a low intensity warfare force. However, he states that the Marines do not have sufficient forces to meet the nation's requirement for LIC and must be supplemented by the two Army light infantry divisions.⁹

U.S. Marine Major Thomas Linn has written several articles on the use of the Marine Corps in LIC. Linn argues against the establishment of a special operations force to combat LIC, but rather prefers conventional forces trained to deal in the LIC environment.¹⁰ He further states that the Marine Corps is the ideal force for the LIC mission, for forced entry and rapid response. Over-specialization of forces may limit the response to LIC situations. Power projection of our forces is important in Third World conflicts. This requires strategic mobility and forcible entry, both of which are Marine Corps hallmarks. Linn clarifies this point with the example of the lift assets required to move an airborne division. It would take over 70 C-5 and 234 C-141 aircraft 21 days to move the entire division.¹¹ In his latest article, "The Marine Corps is Special Operations", Linn states that the USMC has been the nation's all-purpose expeditionary force and has been used as such over 230 times since its inception. The major advantage of Marine forces in LIC is the sea-basing concept. With Marines based at sea, there is no need for extensive land bases, the psychological impact of

warships adds to their effectiveness and the ability to withdrawal quickly reduces the vulnerability both politically and militarily. Our forces must be versatile, not specialized, if we are to be effective in LIC.¹²

In Major Barry Fetzer's article "Give Your Dirty Little Wars To The U.S. Marines", he comments on the ability of the Marine Corps to operate in the LIC environment. Fetzer criticizes the Marine Corps for becoming too much like the Army, with its shift to the mechanized environment. He believes the Marines should be given the full responsibility for LIC and states that the Marines are equipped and capable to do it all. The USMC is the nation's primary instrument of forceful foreign policy. From the raid of the British Fort at Whitehaven in 1778 to the Grenada Operation in 1983, the Marines have been this nation's special operations force. "The global threat the Marine Corps presents to our adversaries is a priceless tool, in diplomacy and deterrence."¹³

Finally, a British Royal Marine, Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Hensman discussed the Marine Corps viability in LIC operations. Hensman believes that like its British counterpart, the U.S. Marines are the ideal force of trained fighters to send at short notice to the trouble spots of the world. However, he states that LIC is not a special operation but an extension of warfare, just as a river crossing or offense and defense are a normal component of warfare. The U.S. Marines are the joint air/land envy of the world, as a highly mobile and deployable, self sustaining package. The U.S. Marine Corps is the best, and

perhaps the only force, capable of responding and deploying quick enough to meet the threat of LIC.¹⁴

This ends the discussion of the Marine Corps in general. The next section will concentrate on the MAU (SOC) and LIC.

Comparison of the Capabilities of the MAU (SOC) and the Requirements to Operate in Low Intensity Conflict

Chapter 2 addressed the capabilities of the MAU (SOC). In Chapter 3, the environment of LIC was discussed. In this section of Chapter 4, the capabilities of the MAU (SOC) will be compared to the requirements for LIC in each of the four mission areas: Foreign Internal Defense, Terrorism Counteraction, Peacekeeping Operations and Peacetime Contingency Operations. This will be followed by a comparison of MAU (SOC) capabilities to the general requirements for LIC, such as: Conventional and Special Operations Forces, Training, Equipment, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations, Intelligence, and Air Power.

Foreign Internal Defense (FID). This area of LIC requires forces to free and protect the host nation from subversion, lawlessness and insurgency. This covers the common area of counterinsurgency and security force operations. To meet the objectives in assistance of the host country, our units normally provide security assistance teams, mobile training teams, advisors and/or combat service support (CSS). In many cases CSS may be more valuable to success than combat units.

The MAU (SOC) has limited capability in FID operations. It

can conduct local Civil Action programs in support of the host nation. CSS functions are available to support host nation requirements. For example, the MAU (SOC) has available engineer support for construction tasks, medical teams for MEDCAP operations, supply and support units for distribution of food and water, and other task organized elements for support of the local populace. A limiting factor is the amount of supply and support aboard amphibious shipping, equal to about 15 days for the embarked forces. The Marines may be able to assist in the receiving and distribution of supplies brought in the host country from airlift or sealift external to the MAU (SOC).

The MAU (SOC) has limited capability for Mobile Training Teams (MTT). This capability is improved when augmented with linguists by the fleet commander. Marines have performed advisor functions for many years, however internal to the MAU (SOC), this capability is limited by the availability of linguists.

The objective of an insurgency is the people of the country, not terrain. This fact should change our tactics and method of employment in FID operations. The MAU (SOC) can provide an initial capability to support the host nation in this struggle. However, the MAU (SOC) operates on a limited support base and should be augmented with follow-on Marine units for prolonged operations. It is better used for rapid response until other forces arrive to assist in countering the insurgency. Intelligence gathering and electronic warfare has been added to the MAU (SOC). This capability can be effectively employed for

FID operations on a limited basis. The MAU (SOC) does not have the capability to conduct psychological operations or for establishing escape and evasion networks or for developing guerilla warfare or subversion operations.

Terrorism Counteraction. There are two types of terrorism counteraction. The first is anti-terrorism which includes individual and unit awareness. The second is counter-terrorism which is the conduct of strikes against terrorist targets. These can be either preemptive or reactive.

The MAU (SOC) has excellent self defense capability for anti-terrorism. It has limited crime prevention capabilities, and must work closely with the supported nation in such tasks. In the area of counter-terrorism, the MAU (SOC) is prepared to provide reactive capability to a terrorist incident, to contain the incident or to assault and rescue hostages if need be in an "in extremis" situation. It does not have the capability to conduct hostage rescue operations as is currently being done by specially trained units, such as Delta Force. The enhanced strike capabilities of the MAU (SOC) will be discussed in peacetime contingency operations.

Peacekeeping Operations. The purpose of peacekeeping operations is to achieve, restore or maintain peace in an area of potential or actual conflict. This includes cease fire operations and law and order maintenance. Peacekeeping requires the use of several methods to accomplish the mission. They are: Observation, Surveillance and Supervision, Patrolling,

Investigation of Complaints, Negotiation and Mediation, and Information Gathering. Another branch of peacekeeping is "peacemaking". The goal in peacemaking is to reach the peacekeeping phase, to establish peace in an area of hostility and conflict. It differs from peacekeeping in that peacemaking may be unilateral and not under the direct support of the host nation. This type of operation is very sensitive and borders between peacetime contingency and peacekeeping operations.

The MAU (SOC) is prepared to operate in both a peacekeeping and a peacemaking environment. The most recent use of a MAU in Beirut, Lebanon was initially a peacekeeping mission. The problem became one of transition from a peacekeeping mission into a peacemaking mission. The preferred method being to transition from peacemaking into peacekeeping. Valuable lessons were learned from this experience. Chapter 2 discussed some of the structural changes and enhancements of the MAU (SOC) to ensure it is now better prepared for this mission.

The addition of intelligence collection and analysis teams, interrogator/translator teams and counterintelligence teams have beefed up the capability of the MAU (SOC) to operate in a sensitive environment such as peacekeeping. New surveillance equipment found in the MAU (SOC) adds to the effectiveness in conducting peacekeeping operations.

In-depth training is conducted prior to a MAU (SOC) deployment in Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT). This training solidifies the unit's ability to perform in one of the

most likely areas for peacekeeping operations, the urban center. Finally, MAU (SOC) units train for operations in periods of reduced visibility. Both air and ground units prepare for night operations through the use of night vision devices. Such night training prepares the Marines to operate during periods of reduced visibility. This capability adds to the overall effectiveness of the MAU (SOC) to operate in almost any environment.

Peacetime Contingency Operations. These operations are politically sensitive, military operations conducted over a short-term period involving the rapid projection and employment of forces in conditions short of conventional war. They include such operations as: Strike, Raid, Noncombatant Emergency Operations (NEO), Recovery/Rescue, Demonstration, Show of Force, Unconventional Warfare, and Intelligence Operations.

The MAU has always been prepared to conduct amphibious raids, limited objective attacks, protection or evacuation of noncombatants and installations, show of force and security operations. The MAU (SOC) has prepared for enhanced accomplishment of those missions as well as several others. The MAU (SOC) can conduct a raid on short notice, at night under EMCON (radio silence or control) conditions via helicopter and/or surface means from extended ranges and conduct an expeditious withdrawal upon completion of the raid. As previously mentioned the MAU (SOC) can conduct signal intelligence/electronic warfare operations.

"In Extremis" hostage rescue operations may be accomplished in emergency situations. Again, this operation is trained to be accomplished at night, under EMCON conditions at extended ranges to rescue hostages and expeditiously withdraw them to U.S. Ships or another safe haven. Under emergency conditions is the key element of this capability. The Marines will not attempt this operation if other specially trained forces are available to conduct hostage rescues.

The MAU (SOC) is capable of conducting the Tactical Recovery of Aircraft, Equipment and Personnel (TRAP). Specialized demolitions operations are another capability of the MAU (SOC) in peacetime contingency operations. The Marines are fully prepared to operate in urban terrain, and have specialized in entry and clearing techniques, and quick-fire methods, especially during periods of reduced visibility. In the area of command and control the MAU (SOC) is capable of assuming operational control for a limited time of other U.S. military special operations forces, such as Army Rangers, or Navy SEALs. It also has the communications capability to interface with the Special Operations Command Support Element (SOCSE) and the Joint Command Support Element (JCSE) through secure satellite (SATCOM) and AM/FM radio communications.

As has been the case over the last two hundred years, the Marines are always ready to show a credible American naval presence in any area of the world where demonstration of U.S. interest or resolve is required. The MAU (SOC) is capable of

providing a credible sea-based capability that is able to loiter indefinitely within a strategic area of interest.

Conventional and Special Operations Forces. LIC requires a different tactical approach than conventional war. Conventional forces can function in LIC, but they must operate differently. The emphasis should be on the small unit level. Effective small unit leadership is critical. The best forces are those that can operate at low visibility and in conjunction with popular forces. The MAU (SOC) is ideally trained and organized for this type of action. Small unit leadership is a hallmark of the Marine Corps and these units train at the small unit level.

Special operations forces have been proven to be effective in LIC operations. The MAU (SOC) employs specially trained teams for contingency operations missions. For example, raid units have special teams trained for assault, demolitions and extraction. Force Reconnaissance teams train with Navy SEAL units for coordinated strike operations. Maximum use is made of mobility, stealth, deception and surprise.

Training. LIC operations require specialized training at all levels. As just mentioned, small unit leadership is key. Also important is the training of the senior leadership in combatting the foe in a LIC environment. Large, set piece battles are the exception. We must remember the objectives are oriented at the people and not the terrain. It is not enough to train and educate our forces on the military aspects of LIC. We must also prepare for the political, social, psychological and

economic battles in LIC. The MAU (SOC) trains and educates at all levels. Shipboard training includes instruction in foreign nations, politically and militarily. Intelligence teams augment the MAU (SOC) to provide Humint (Human Intelligence) in the area of operations. This added capability enhances the effectiveness of the MAU (SOC) to achieve national objectives and focus on the targeted weakness of the enemy.

Equipment. Special weapons, transportation and service support equipment is required to operate in the LIC arena. In Vietnam, we found our heavy weapons to be ineffective in house to house combat; the need for close range weapons became apparent. Likewise, different situations require different equipment. The MAU (SOC) has been tailored with special equipment to support the missions described earlier. Long range raids under limited visibility require special navigational and communication equipment; the MAU (SOC) has acquired the proper equipment to allow it to carry out this task. The MAU (SOC) has a ready arsenal of weapons for use in special circumstances. The CSS element has been reinforced with special equipment to support the enhanced operational capability of the MAU (SOC).

Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations. This aspect of LIC may be the most important of all. These units are force multipliers much as artillery is in conventional war. We have discussed the objective of LIC in terms of people and their influence on the success of LIC operations. Civil affairs and psychological operations units can help win the battle of the

people. The Marine Corps has long been in the civil affairs business and the MAU (SOC) is prepared to conduct civil affairs programs. However, it does not have the psychological operations forces and must rely on the U.S. Army units for such duties. The Marine Corps pioneered the Combined Action Platoon concept in Vietnam, which proved very successful in winning the "hearts and minds" of the civilians in their area of operations. This concept is still valid today and can be employed by the MAU (SOC). Another force multiplier in this area are long term country specialists. These are military members who have specialized in a particular area of the world. They have spent many years learning the people, the language, the customs, and the culture. Unfortunately, the Marine Corps, and for that matter none of the Armed Forces, have done well in this area. If we hope to have a successful influence on the outcome of the Third World we must devote time, money and manpower to this critically important aspect of LIC operations.

Intelligence. Another critical element of success in LIC is intelligence capabilities of the intervening forces. A structure must be established with the host nation that is formed in a hierarchy, from the smallest units in remote sites to the political and military headquarters at the capitol. Previously mentioned was the priority for Humint. All effort must be used to gather human intelligence at all levels. As important as obtaining information is the denial to the enemy of your operations. Counterintelligence is also an important element to

success in LIC. The history of the Vietnam War is littered with examples of our failure to deny the enemy friendly elements of information. The MAU (SOC) has prepared for this requirement of increased emphasis on intelligence and counterintelligence. Teams have augmented the MAU in intelligence collection, analysis and interpreting. A counterintelligence (CI) team has been added to the structure to assist CI efforts. Interrogator/Translator Teams (ITT) provide assistance in collection of Humint. All Marines are trained to be intelligence gatherers in the LIC arena.

Air Power. Our new high tech jets are great in Air-Land Battle in Western Europe, but in LIC they may not be as useful. More important may be the strategic or operational lift capabilities of C-5 or C-141 aircraft. The primary role of aircraft may be in troop movement, resupply and reconnaissance. The MAU (SOC) can be augmented with AV-8B Harriers, and/or KC-130 tankers for long range refueling operations. Helicopters have been shown to be extremely vulnerable to innovations in surface to air missiles. The MAU (SOC) has enhanced its helicopter fleet with better navigational equipment, to include reduced visibility vision devices, improved detection of the surface to air threat and air to air defense systems.

The Role of the MAU (SOC) in Low Intensity Conflict

Marine Gunnery Sergeant Michael Zurat reemphasized the

historic use of the Marine Corps in LIC. He says "first to fight" is more than just a motto. Zurat believes the Marine Corps must prepare for its most likely mission, that of LIC operations.¹⁵

The MAU (SOC) is a capable force available for rapid deployment and employment throughout the world. It is task organized and can be further augmented or reinforced based on the situation and mission. As a sea-based force, the MAU (SOC) provides many unique capabilities. Large land bases are not necessary. Operations may be initiated from over the horizon. Withdrawal of Marine forces is rapid, providing low visibility of the force.

The Marine Corps has been this nation's historic expeditionary force, capable of many missions. Use of the MAU (SOC) can stand as a deterrent of further aggression or as a preventive measure of hostile action. It is a viable force for use in counterinsurgency and security operations.¹⁶

The MAU (SOC) has limited applicability in Counterterrorism operations. They are not a specialized force for "surgical operations".¹⁷ The U.S. has more highly trained forces for this type of mission, such as Delta Force. Should the situation be under extreme circumstances and other specially trained forces are not available, the MAU (SOC) is prepared to attempt hostage rescue. The MAU (SOC) is capable of working with special operations forces in supporting hostage rescue and have unique abilities in assistance of this mission. Other counterterrorism

operations such as reactive strikes and raids are within the capability of the MAU (SOC). Marine Warrant Officer Thomas Tomka believes that with the addition of a Special Reaction Team and a Crisis Management Team, the MAU (SOC) can have a viable force to respond to terrorism. He lends credence to the belief that terrorism is the tactic of WW III, by describing that between 1982-1986 over 250 attacks occurred on U.S. Department of Defense personnel and equipment.¹⁰

The USMC and the MAU (SOC) are the ideal force to fill this nation's requirements for peacetime contingency response. The forward deployed status, the high state of readiness and the task organized capabilities of the MAU (SOC) provide the National Command Authority with a viable forced entry, rapid response capability just as it has for the past two hundred years. From peacetime presence, to power projection and from noncombatant evacuations to amphibious raids the MAU (SOC) is organized, trained and equipped to carry out the task.

This ends the comparison of the capabilities of the MAU (SOC) and the requirements for LIC operations. The final chapter will summarize the results of this paper and offer recommendations for future study of this topic.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this final chapter we will review the results of the study, examine some of the future implications of the role of the MAU (SOC) in LIC, and discuss future recommendations for study.

Review of the Study

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the capabilities of the newly organized MAU (SOC) and compare it to the requirements for operating in the LIC environment to determine the role of the MAU (SOC) in LIC.

MAU (SOC) Capabilities. Chapter 2 discussed the improved capabilities of the MAU (SOC) and its organization, mission and functions. The MAU has been relied upon many times in the past to respond on behalf of this nation's interests around the globe. Likewise the enhanced task organization of the MAU (SOC) is better prepared to carry out that mission in a volatile environment.

Low Intensity Conflict. Chapter 3 examined the LIC environment and what the requirements are to operate in LIC. We discussed LIC in terms of "operations short of war", as "small wars" and as separate military operations, such as offense and defense. LIC is a changing situation which requires flexibility

and close examination in each circumstance. There is no cookbook formula for LIC. Although many disagree on what constitutes LIC, very few disagree that it will be our most likely area of involvement over the next twenty years. This then, is the reason for the need to prepare for our involvement in LIC.

Comparison of MAU (SOC) and LIC. In Chapter 4, the two primary topics were compared and the resulting role of the MAU (SOC) in LIC operations was discussed. There was found to be a historic and current precedent for the use of such a unit as the MAU (SOC) in Peacekeeping and Peacetime Contingency operations. Additionally, the added task organization of the MAU (SOC) has expanded their role in Foreign Internal Defense and Terrorism Counteraction operations.

Conclusions of the Study

LIC poses unique requirements under many different circumstances and conditions. It requires flexibility, both politically and militarily. In some cases it will be better to lead the "attack" with combat service support units as opposed to combat units. The key characteristic is one of people and not terrain. We must be prepared to deal with the entire spectrum of society not just the military. Political, social, psychological and economic factors must be dealt with from the squad leader all the way to the Commanding General.

The MAU (SOC) offers the National Command Authority and the Unified Commander a rapidly deployable, credible force for

employment in LIC operations. The enhancements in equipment and the expanded structure and organization of the MAU (SOC) increase its capabilities in the execution of special operations in the LIC environment. Although limited in its staying power, the MAU (SOC) is a valuable force for rapid response until it can be reinforced with additional Marine Corps or other service assets. This "selective rapid reinforcement" capability offers maximum flexibility and would facilitate the use of Maritime Prepositioned Ships in reinforcing the MAU (SOC) mission.¹ The MAU (SOC) is well suited for augmentation and easily task organizes to fit the mission.

The greatest strength of the MAU (SOC) is in response to peacetime contingency operations. As a forward deployed force, capable of forced entry, and operating from a sea based environment, the MAU (SOC) is able to respond to any number of contingencies, from a show of force to an amphibious raid. The use of the Marine Corps as this nation's quick reaction force for the last two centuries has built an experienced force with a reputation throughout the world for its ability to respond to world crises involving our national interests.

Future Implications

But what problems are facing the nation in the use of this force? Admiral William F. McCauley believes that the reality of the number of "hot spots" occurring simultaneously in several places will place greater demands on the capabilities of our

Amphibious Ready Groups (ARG) and MAU (SOC)'s.² There are only two MAU (SOC) units deployed at a time, one in the Pacific and one in the Atlantic/Mediterranean areas. As this paper is being written there is a crisis in Panama, the Persian Gulf incidents continue, the Contras battle for freedom in Nicaragua, the war burns on between Iran and Iraq, the Palestinians protest on the West Bank, the Vietnamese are occupying Cambodia, an airliner and its passengers are held hostage by terrorists, and the North Koreans continue to fan the terrorist flames in Asia.

Earlier, this paper discussed the growth of conflict throughout the Third World. How will we be able to respond to the many calls for our assistance? The Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Thomas R. Morgan addressed that question in his article "A Look To The Future." The Marine Corps has a difficult time preparing for conventional war in Europe and at the same time, being prepared for LIC and constabulary missions. It is difficult to balance the two. If the Marine Corps is to prepare for LIC, the most likely mission, the Corps must reorient toward MAU and MAB size operations and not to MAFs. MAUs form a leading edge capability to act early and "short stop" a crisis before larger forces are necessary. The Marine Corps must be able to deploy rapidly, project power at a point of our choosing and win.³

In 1940, the Marine Corps created two Raider Battalions. The mainstream Marine Corps resisted the idea of an "elite within an elite", as the Marine Corps was already in the raiding

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business.⁴ Just as in WW II, some Marines today resist the idea of a Special Operations Capable MAU. It has seen such names as the "Ninja MAU", in deference to the black uniforms of the raid units. But, most agree that the MAU (SOC) is an improvement on our standard MAU, in that the improvement is the ability to respond to the LIC environment. The leadership of the Marine Corps must insure that the MAU (SOC) is employed within its capabilities and not misused, as were the Raider Battalions of WW II, in conventional operations. The MAU (SOC) has a front seat for participation in LIC and is well prepared for the battle.

The recent Marine Corps focus on mechanized forces and maneuver warfare has caught the eye of many Marines who are aware of the past history of the Marine Corps and its participation in LIC operations. In 1980 Colonel John Grinalds took a look at "The Corps 20 Years From Now", and believes that the USMC focus on Europe as the next battlefield is wrong. Third World economic struggle will be at the base of future involvement of Marines throughout the rest of this century.⁵

In 1987, Major Paul Melshen agreed with Colonel Grinalds in that the Corps has become over-mechanized. He further states that the problems of the Marine Corps' ability to deal with LIC lies in an over reliance on technology and firepower, a lack of knowledge of political, social and economic environment and a shortage of tactics and doctrine for LIC operations. Melshen proposes solutions to these problems: the Marine Corps should

expand its Foreign Area Officer program, reduce its reliance on firepower and increase the "people power" as was done in the Combined Action Platoon program in Vietnam. Also, a shift to decentralized training and a reduction in large unit operations above the MAU or battalion level would better prepare the Marine Corps for LIC.*

The Marine Corps appears to be heading in the right direction in responding to the LIC environment. The recent comments and emphasis on LIC study by the Commandant, General Gray, the change of the name of MASTFs from amphibious to expeditionary and the enhancement of the MAU (SOC) to be better prepared for LIC operations are all signs of progress. Although, as highlighted by the authors above there are still many issues yet to be resolved. The next few years will tell the direction of the Marine Corps and clarify the role of the Corps in the LIC arena.

Recommendations for Further Study

There are three primary recommendations that will be addressed in this section. The first will discuss the Department of Defense, the second will discuss the training and education of all forces preparing for LIC and the last recommendation will examine a further analysis of the Marine Corps role in LIC.

Department of Defense. Many problems with military response in operations find their roots in the "System." The system for dealing with military involvement in LIC begins at the Department

of Defense (DOD) and with the establishment of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and LIC. Does this mean that our response to LIC will only be through special operations forces? A current study at the JFK School of Government at Harvard University has developed several recommendations for organization and employment of forces in the LIC environment. One of their recommendations is to organize and train specific forces to operate in LIC and they believe these forces should be identified in the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan, the DOD plan for the employment of forces.⁷ If we are to be prepared to fight in the LIC environment we must have a proper organization to deal with the intricacies of LIC. Further study and examination of the DOD level of organization for LIC operations would assist in this area.

Education and Training. It has been said many times that we spend too much time fighting the last war. We must move on and prepare for the most likely war. Our professional education system in the military seriously neglects this preparation for involvement in LIC. Furthermore, a key factor in LIC, combined operations, is ignored. In the U.S. Army Command and General Staff Officer College there is a paucity of instruction on how to fight in the combined environment. What are the problems, the pitfalls, with combined operations? Have we never fought in a combined operation? Do we expect to combat LIC on our own? We must get serious about LIC and stop paying lip service to our most likely conflict. Air Land Battle is a great concept and

makes for great discussions for World War III, but in many military theorists' minds, WW III has begun and the battlefield is LIC. Future study of our Staff College and War College curriculum could determine any shortfalls in LIC education.

The Role of the Marine Corps in LIC. This study has only introduced the Marine Corps' role in LIC. Much more creative thinking needs to be done. Should all Marine Corps forces focus on LIC? What about the Marine Corps mission on the NATO Northern flank? Another area for analysis could be the long-term use of Marines in LIC. The Marine Corps is accustomed to "short and sweet" operations, but as in Vietnam, some LIC operations are for the long-term. In Malaya the British spent over twenty years in a counterinsurgency program. Are we prepared to do the same? Future study of these issues could establish an overall strategy of the Marine Corps in preparing for "our most Likely conflict".

There are many more questions that could be addressed. The most important one is are we prepared to fight in the Low Intensity Conflict environment?

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Pensacola, Florida 32514
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